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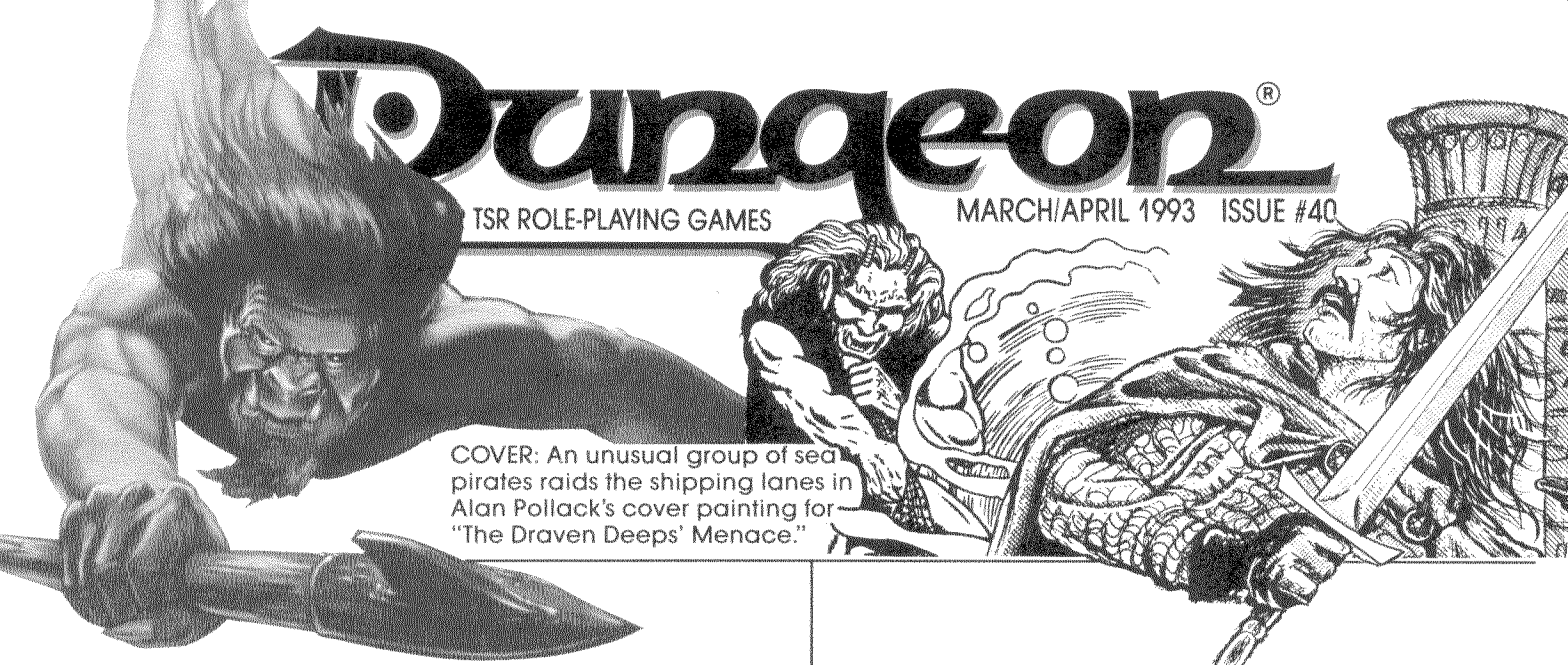
Dungeon®

TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

MARCH/APRIL 1993 ISSUE #40



COVER: An unusual group of sea pirates raids the shipping lanes in Alan Pollack's cover painting for "The Draven Deeps' Menace."

Life in a Time Warp

It happens to me every year, but this time I did it in public. I've learned to dutifully write the new year on a full pad of checks, and WordPerfect has solved the problem for letters (the computer knows what year it is, even if I don't). So why can't I remember that even though an issue goes to press in November, it's supposed to be dated the following year? My abject apologies to all of those who were confused by the dating of issue #39. It is indeed the January/February **1993** issue.

You may have noticed that we haven't run a SideTreks adventure in several issues. No, we haven't discontinued this popular feature; we just haven't had the space to publish one. Look for the return of SideTreks soon.

We drew 10 reader surveys at random from all those received by October 31, 1992. Each winner receives a one-year subscription to DUNGEON® Adventures. The lucky few are:

Stefano Sorbara, Torino, Italy
Penn H. Eckert, Philadelphia PA
Kurt Spearing, Charleston IL
Timo Haritun, Toronto ON
Jim Hall, Durham NC
Ted Sanfilippo, Rochester NY
Paul Flathers, Brockton MA
Robert Heinle, Westminster CA
Christopher Taylor, McAlester OK
Victor Hayslip, Indianapolis IN

Thanks to everyone who took the time to fill out the survey. Many of you included additional comments or long letters, all of which were read by the editors.

This issue's quote, which aptly fits the adventure "Khamsa's Folly," was sent in by world-traveler Allen Varney, who may be reading this in Java or Bali as the editors sit shivering through another Wisconsin winter.

Barbara G. Young

Vol. VII, No. 4

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Vain the ambition of kings
Who seek by trophies and dead things
To leave a living name behind,
And weave but nets to catch the wind.
John Webster, *The Devil's Law Case*

LETTERS

Adventures in Any Language

I have been a DM for four years, and I play only the D&D® game system. Your magazine is excellent to read, and the adventures are very good, but in Italy, only lovers of the English language can afford the time to translate your magazine and put the adventures into a campaign.

I am able to adapt all the systems (RAVENLOFT®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, DRAGONLANCE®, WORLD OF GREYHAWK®) to my campaigns, using my imagination. In fact, I have all the supplements for the D&D game but none for the AD&D® system, and my friends love it.

To reference the letter criticizing the price of the magazine, I say that in Italy DUNGEON® Magazine costs around $7.50, but that is not an obstacle for me. I have all the numbers of your fantastic magazine from #8 to #35.

I like boxed text, posters, and trading cards, and I agree with those people who say that the magazine should publish D&D and AD&D game modules only. You are doing a great job; continue in this way forever.

Massimo Trevisan
Abano, Italy

Fountain of Smiles

When I received issue #39 of your magazine, I quickly opened it up and read all of it on the first few nights. It soon came time to use these adventures in my gaming group. The one I selected was "The Fountain of Health," which easily converted to AD&D game rules.

As it turned out, through bad rolls and extreme tension, almost the entire group was killed by the giant racer snake in the dormitory. The two surviving members, both of them wizards, were later destroyed by the wandering stirges. The party never even got a chance to fight the gargoyle.

Immediately after the adventure, I apologized for killing all the PCs, but despite their characters' deaths, the players left with smiles on their faces.

I would like to thank DUNGEON Adventures and Ann Dupuis for providing an adventure that my players and I will never forget.

Justin D. Somma
Brooklyn, New York

Sweet Grapes

No one knows better than I do how unfounded F.C.'s accusations [in issue #38] are. As a writer, I was unknown, unconnected, unpublished, and highly frustrated until I decided I should give up trying to break straight into fiction and spend some time honing my writing skills as a freelancer. That's when I realized I could write for DUNGEON magazine, so I sent off for its guidelines. In a couple of weeks, I'd fleshed out a proposal for "The Ghost of Mistmoor" [issue #35], and almost as quickly I got a response. So began my writing career.

Since that time, I've written four modules for DUNGEON Adventures, all of them generic AD&D adventures. I also have three approved proposals waiting for me to finish them up and mail them in, and two of those are for generic settings as well.

The professionalism and courtesy the DUNGEON staff has shown me has never been anything short of exemplary. No one I've worked with has ever outdone them in this respect. The only complaint I could concoct is that they took six months to get back to me on the first draft of "Mistmoor," and even then they responded immediately when I prodded them with a long-overdue gentle reminder.

I've never had a finished manuscript rejected by DUNGEON magazine (and I've had only one proposal rejected), and it's not because I pander to TSR's new product lines or because I started out as some sort of insider. It's because I've taken time to learn the AD&D game inside out; because I've taken time to learn my craft as a writer; because I watch the "Letters" column for what readers want and what they're tired of; because I pay attention to details and always strive to maintain a professional attitude; and because I take pride in my work without being pompous about it. I accept editorial input and make any changes asked for unless I think there's a very good reason not to—in which case I present my viewpoint, and Barbara and I hash it out. But most of all, DUNGEON Adventures buys my work because I never send them a manuscript or an idea for one unless it's one that I would be happy to see in the magazine if someone else had written it.

That's how to get adventures printed in DUNGEON magazine, and F.C.'s claim that you have to pander to special interests couldn't be further from the truth.

Leonard Wilson
Crocker, Missouri

Wish List

Since the editors have put out their wish lists of what they would like to receive for submissions, here is part of *my* wish list:

—Adventures that use nonstandard game rules, such as those taken from the historical sourcebooks, DRAGON® Magazine, or the author's own campaign.

—Adventures set in unusual settings: inner/outer planes, Wildspace, the high seas, the arctic, etc. Examples in past issues include "The Titan's Dream" (issue #2), "Chadranther's Bane" (issue #18), and "Chest of the Aloeids" (issue #21).

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—Adventures that showcase unusual monsters. For example, "Masqueraider" (issue #14) featured the protein polymorph, and "Pearlman's Curiosity" (issue #32) had a nilbog. Before reading that adventure, I considered the nilbog to be nothing more than a nonsense monster. Reading about the effects of nilbogism opened my mind to all kinds of nasty ideas to spring on my players.

—More adventures that involve the use of humor, either the slightly humorous such as "The Wayward Wood" (issue #32), or the downright silly such as "Fluffy Goes to Heck" (issue #4).

—More details for all the major NPCs in each adventure, including kits and nonweapon proficiencies in addition to level, class, statistics, and weapons.

Wendell Works
Truro, Nova Scotia

Psionics for All

About your decision in issue #38 to restrict psionics to the DARK SUN setting: I think it's a bad idea. First of all, I don't like the DARK SUN setting, but I do think that there is potential for psionics outside of this setting. You simply need to use your creativity and imagination. A good example of an adventure using psionics with creativity is "Beyond the Glittering Veil" (issue #31) by Steven Kurtz, which convinced me to buy the *Complete Psionics Handbook.* I would like you to reserve judgment on psionics and print any good (non-DARK SUN) modules you receive that use the psionics rules.

Kenneth Smith
Payson, Utah

When the survey results are fully tabulated, we'll rethink our position on psionics adventures.

DUNGEON® Adventures Generic and Universal

I started subscribing after seeing the first issue of DUNGEON Adventures, while still DM-ing an AD&D campaign. Now, years later, although I have switched to the GURPS system, DUNGEON magazine is still of value to me.

I have run many of the published adventures straight out of the magazine with minor alterations, for hours of gaming pleasure. If the adventures aren't suitable for my campaign, I can still mine them for ideas, situations, NPCs, and other useful nuggets.

A particular favorite is the "Side-Treks" feature.

Eric Raboy
Windemere, Florida

Travel Between Modules

I'm the DM of a group of creative, madcap adventurers who've been playing together once a week for about four years. Since I'm probably Houston's oldest DM (61 years old), the "young whippersnappers" keep me hopping to come up with topflight modules. DUNGEON Adventures gives me a load of ideas, so even if a particular module doesn't exactly fit our style of play, it usually starts the creative juices flowing.

Three months ago, we started a new group of 1st-level adventurers so that several new members wouldn't be overwhelmed by those who've been playing together for a while. Our first module was "Isle of the Abbey" (issue #34). The adventurers found themselves on a beach in their underwear, with no weapons other than a club or dagger. After dealing with the skeletons, they traveled through a swamp where they met a native with a bloody bundle on his shoulder. It turned out to be a pig he was taking home for supper, and the PCs were invited to accompany him to his village.

At the native village, the PCs were told they could find horses at a freehold some miles away ("Siege of Kratys Freehold," issue #33). As suggested at the end of that module, the deaths of some of the freeholders were blamed on the PCs, and they were firmly sent off in the direction of the next large town "somewhere to the north."

The party followed the road to "In the Dread of Night" (issue #24), after which they headed off to a good-sized town to find mentors for level training. The next two modules ("The Inheritance," issue #26, and "A Wizard's Fate," issue #37) contributed several continuing NPCs.

DMs should feel free to go along with some of the strange ideas and relationships that the party comes up with during the actual playing of a module. The emphasis should be on role playing, so that even though the adventure doesn't always turn out the way the author intended, your better game players are going to keep coming back for more.

One of the greatest ways you've published for getting from one place to another is the selective use of Larry Church's "Secrets of the Towers" (issue #10). The towers in our campaign have the habit of teleporting when needed.

Thanks for keeping on with the publication. It's the DM's lifesaver.

Hank McNally
Houston, Texas

Unbeatable or Incompetent

I love your magazine. I really do. But I think it's time to voice some general complaints about the adventures you accept.

Writers do not fully consider the consequences of the creatures they place in their adventures, nor do they use them to their fullest advantage. Case in point: "A Blight on the Land" (issue #38). The five baatezu in this adventure are only tenuously held in check by magic spells. There is no logical reason why they would return to the Nine Hells when they can spawn a whole cornucopia of evil on the Prime Material plane. They could escape the PCs (using *teleport without error*) and slay all the monsters themselves, then set up a monstrous undead army (they can *animate dead*). If all four osyluth go *invisible* and drop *ice storms* on the PCs' heads, the adventure ends quickly. This brings me to my next point.

The foes in your adventures always seem to have unbeatable tactics or are totally incompetent. Pomerian the lich ["The Pipes of Doom," issue #28] slaughtered my PCs, even though they had more levels than you claimed were necessary. However, the wizard Minshak Keseri ["A Blight on the Land," issue #38] seems unable to use his own spells and magical items properly. When he hears the alarm, he should go *invisible,* summon the elemental and as many monsters as possible, and carve a *symbol of stunning* in front of the entrance. When the PCs hit the *symbol,* anyone still standing should be hit with *power word stun* or *prismatic spray.* With his 18 Intelligence, Minshak Keseri is a genius. It would be nice if some of that genius were allowed to reign.

Villains are people, too. If the villain is faceless and uses shoddy tactics, he is not memorable. If the villain is devious, sneaky, ruthless, cruel, and uses everything he can to his advantage, then he is truly evil.

Michael Satran
Kingston, Rhode Island

Ω

SONG OF THE FENS

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

The short, muddy life of Wendall the troll

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

A lifelong reader and lover of fantasy, Brad has just recently begun to expand his interest in writing. He would welcome comments about "Song of the Fens" from DMs and players alike. If you'd like to write, you can reach him at 18 Chestnut Street, Salem MA 01970.

"Song of the Fens" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 1-3 (about 12 total levels). It works best for a group of good-aligned PCs who place more emphasis on moral rewards than on amassing wealth. Further, this adventure requires that the PCs be very cooperative and diplomatic with each other and with the NPCs. There are several encounters that could lead to the destruction of the entire party if the PCs do not handle them in a careful and thoughtful fashion.

Because of this adventure's dangerous encounters, the Dungeon Master is encouraged to use the "Hovering on Death's Door" optional rule (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 75).

Adventure Background

Sarruh's Rest is a thriving inn on a well-traveled road leading toward Newsporth, a major shipping community. The road is shored up by a great stone retaining wall where it runs along Lake Winnosett, and is separated from the lake water by only a thin marshy strip known as Vile's Fen. The locals correctly believe the marsh to be haunted.

This very fen makes the inn prosper. When faced with a choice of spending the night on the cold road next to a swamp or in the warm comfort of the tavern room, most travelers choose the inn. Golten Sarruh has run the inn for 20 years and has become quite wealthy.

Golten's daughter, Martinique, has just recently passed from adolescence into womanhood. She is quite beautiful, and many of the travelers who have passed through the inn have sought a tryst with her by night. Golten has been very careful to shield Martinique from these casual affairs; he envisions a better life for her than that of a common tavern wench.

When it came time for Martinique to marry, Golten looked first among the local minor nobility for a suitable son-in-law. When he discovered that Faranth, the son of a local knight from a very well connected family, was unattached, Golten approached the boy's father, Sir

Abernd. Sir Abernd is a social gadfly and a gambling addict always in need of money. Once he heard about the generous dowry and saw the beautiful Martinique, Sir Abernd quickly agreed that a union between the two families was an excellent idea.

With the marriage already consummated in the minds of their parents, Faranth and Martinique began the difficult processes of courtship. Faranth thinks Martinique is both pretty and pleasant, but his heart is not in the courting. Faranth isn't really interested in marriage; he courts Martinique because his father wants him to. Faranth wants to become a famous knight—he's certain that he would make a fantastic dragon hunter if only someone would give him a chance. Marriage does not fit his image of a great adventurer, but if he has to be married, Martinique's beauty makes her a better candidate than most. Therefore, Faranth has made a proposal of marriage to Martinique.

Faranth's proposal elicited a cool response from Martinique. She didn't turn him down flat, but she didn't jump for joy either. Martinique thinks Faranth is moderately attractive and well-spoken, but his topics of conversation generally bore her. He goes on endlessly about the tournament conquests of the knights of the realm. Martinique is not interested in tournaments, but she figures she can live with Faranth's idiosyncrasy, as long as he's a good husband and father. She'd rather have had a dashing, romantic husband who would devote himself entirely to her pleasure, but Faranth makes an acceptable—if boring—second choice.

Martinique had almost given up on romance and accepted Faranth's proposal when the singing started. As the melodious tones swept up from the fen that first evening, Martinique's heart was lost. In an instant, her love was captured by the dulcet tones that drifted across the inn like great gossamer strands of silk. Martinique knew in her heart that she would never love anyone except the maker of this glorious music.

Faranth had departed for a month to attend a joust, and so he couldn't counter the effect of the singing on Martinique. Even if he had been around, the singing is so emotionally powerful that it is unlikely that he could have distracted her from it.

Spurred by her passion, Martinique swept out of the inn before anyone could stop her. Out in the front courtyard, she vainly peered out over the marsh in search of the singer. Though the full moon lit up the night like a cloudy day, she could not spot the singer, but her passion did not make her foolish enough to journey into the fen that night. So when her father came out to the yard and gathered her up, she went willingly, but gently murmured as she crossed the threshold of the inn, "I'll never love another."

Her father was displeased, and he stayed up all night listening to the singing and his daughter's pacing. He worried when his daughter announced her intention to search for the singer early the next morning. He sent Devish, the handyman, with her to make sure she did not wander into the marsh, and he was relieved when they returned empty handed. But he worried when the singing began again the next night and he could hear Martinique sighing heavily every time the singer paused for breath.

Concerned that some evil spirit of the swamp had bewitched his daughter, Golten paid close attention to her behavior for the next few days. Other than a few sleepless nights, she slowly returned to her normal behavior. After a week, Golten relaxed; his daughter no longer spoke of the singer, and he felt that Faranth's return in a few weeks would bring with it wedding bells.

Thus, he was surprised to discover his daughter covered with mud and ooze the next day, walking up the road from the marsh. She had secretly gone out to search the fen and had fallen into one of the many hidden mud pits. Fortunately, she grabbed a handful of cattails and managed to pull herself out.

Martinque's return to apparent normality had been a front to fool her father. He and most of the locals accept the singing as just another example of the danger of the fens. If it were not for the way the singing disturbs his daughter, Golten Sarruh would quickly dismiss the continuing phenomenon as a harmless noise that ultimately might help him get more overnight guests.

As it was, Golten, angered and worried by Martinique's dangerous behavior, blew up at his daughter. After several minutes of yelling, he told her to wash, then go to her room and stay there until Faranth returned, at which time they would be married. Martinique wailed that she did not love Faranth and that she would never take him for a husband and that her own father shouldn't be so cruel, but it was to no avail. She found herself locked in her room, high on the second story, with only a window overlooking the fen where her beloved singer dwelled.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

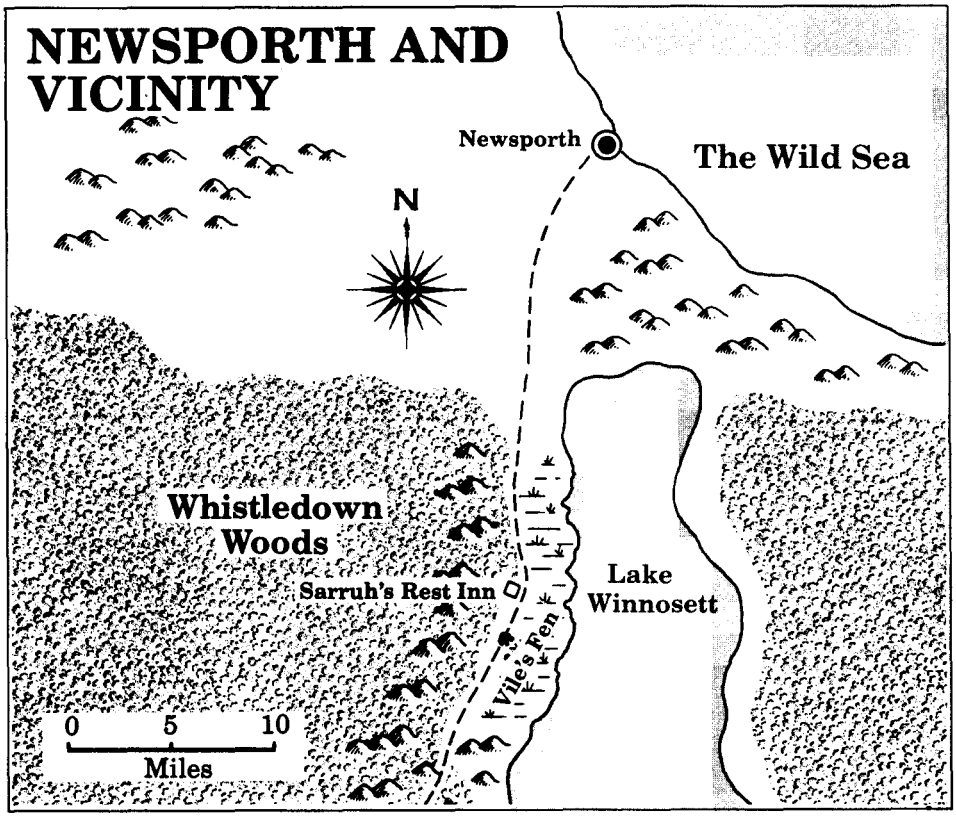
Martinique's beloved singer is a misfit troll named Wendall who has just moved into the swamp. Driven out of his ancestral home far to the south because of his untrollish behavior, he traveled north until he found a desolate place far from other trolls. Vile's Fen suits him perfectly; no other trolls live there, it's wet and muddy, and he has a nice cave to live in. Since he moved in, he has spent his days sleeping and his nights wandering the marsh, singing joyfully to himself. Wendall sings from dusk to dawn, when he goes to sleep. For more details on Wendall, see area 5.

Several ghouls and zombies also haunt Vile's Fen. They are the marsh's legacy from Vile, an evil necromancer who once kept a small summer cottage here. Vile's evil life was unexpectedly cut short when a group of adventurers surprised him in his tower many miles away. His death has left the ghouls free to do as they wish, while the zombies continue to guard the remains of his cabin. For more information, see "Vile's Fen."

Golten plans to keep his daughter locked up until Faranth returns, when he will force his daughter to accept the young man's proposal. Golten doesn't mean to hurt his daughter's feelings, but he is certain that he knows what is best for her. Since Martinique has no mother (she died bearing Martinique), Golten makes all of the decisions for the Sarruh family. Unless someone interferes, Golten's word is law and Martinique will be forced to follow her father's wishes, though she will always regret not following her heart.

For the Player Characters

The adventure begins when the PCs are on the road. Arriving at Sarruh's Rest after a long day should be quite a relief, as the possibility of camping next to the swamp is not appealing. As the PCs approach the inn, read or paraphrase the following to the players:



It has been a long day. You have followed the road for hours through hills and woods, with small, inhospitable-looking farms along the way. The last homestead you saw was several miles back, and the road now runs along a large lake, separated from the road by a thin marsh dotted with small hummocks. Only a steep retaining wall keeps the marsh from reclaiming the road. Looking onto the marsh brings an oppressive sense of watchfulness, as if something within hungers after you.

Thus, you feel a great sense of relief when, through the twilight haze, you see a sign for the Sarruh's Rest Inn that directs you away from the marsh. After traveling a few hundred feet up a steep, tree-covered hill, you find the inn's large open courtyard, currently empty. Two buildings—a large, sturdy stone building, and a smaller wooden barn—surround the courtyard.

As you approach the inn's front door, you hear a small commotion from a second-story window. You look up just in time to see a ravishing young woman push open the shutters and look out longingly over the trees toward the swamp.

Catching sight of you out of the corner of her eye, she looks down and squeaks, "Oh!" Then her eyes narrow, and she gestures for you to come closer. She leans dangerously far out of the window in order to speak to you softly.

"Are you noble and honorable, and do you believe that true love should always triumph?" she asks.

If the party rejects this description, Martinique sighs and says, "Alas, true love is an endangered beast." Looking down again, she continues. "If you should meet someone who does believe in true love, send him to me, I beg of you. I am in sore need of aid."

With this pronouncement, she closes the shutters, ignoring the party. From this point on, Martinique tells the party nothing more, even if they stay long enough to see her look out her window again. The PCs must seek some other young maiden to champion. However, if the party offers to help, read or paraphrase the following:

You agree that certainly, you are all noble and honorable believers in true love. Hearing this, the beautiful young woman smiles sadly and says, "My name is Martinique, and I need your aid in a matter of love. I am being kept prisoner in my room by my father to prevent me from seeking my true love. He wants me to marry some drudge son of a noble, but I love only the singer of the marsh." She puts her delicate finger to her lips and says, "Listen, he begins."

Pausing to listen, you hear a deep, melodious tone unlike anything you have ever heard before. It slowly becomes louder, but you can't quite make out the words. The melody is slow, but the singer's tone is joyful. The gaiety is catching and as you listen, you find yourself smiling.

The woman turns back to you with a dreamy, half-distant smile on her perfect face. "Isn't it obvious that we belong together? I love him so, but I can't find him. Will you search the fens for me until you find the bard who sings so wonderfully and tell him of my love?"

From behind the woman, you hear a loud clatter and a heavy bump. A male voice, stern and strong, calls out. He must be behind a door, because his voice is too muffled for you to understand. The woman turns her head into the room and says, "I'm dressing, Father. Please be patient a moment."

She quickly undoes a blue ribbon from her hair and, turning away modestly, pulls something from her bodice. Then she tosses down a scroll wrapped with the hair ribbon. "I must hurry. Please, I beg of you, take that token to the singer and tell him of my devotion. I'll never marry another, I swear!"

With that, she reaches out and closes the shutters. You hear her call out "Coming, Father!" and the closing shutters obscure the rest. Meanwhile, the beautiful singing continues in the fens behind you.

Martinique had just finished the letter when the PCs arrived. She chose the PCs to deliver her note because they look well traveled. She knows that the local folk (wood-cutters and farmers) are

more likely to heed her father's wishes than her own.

There is absolutely nothing compelling the PCs to deliver the letter to the mysterious singer other than their own sense of chivalry. Martinique has no money and can give the PCs nothing but her thanks. This is the only reward that they can expect.

The unsealed letter is only loosely bound by the ribbon. Only politeness prevents the PCs from reading it. The letter says:

> *To the singer who has won my heart,*
>
> *I am nothing but a lonely woman whose heart has been touched by your song. Though I am promised to another, I am forever captured by your voice and wish only to spend every waking moment basking in its beauty. Will you not come to my side, so that we can spend the rest of our days together, bound together by our undying love? I am at the Sarruh's Rest Inn. I eagerly await your arrival.*
>
> *With Love Forever,*
> *Martinique*

The letter is written in black ink on creamy white stock. It has apparently been written with a great deal of care; each "i" is dotted with a tiny heart.

Martinique: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 14, C 10, I 13, W 8, Ch 17; ML 11; knife.

Martinique is a ravishing blonde 17-year old with deep blue eyes. She knows how gorgeous she is, and she moves with the grace of the totally self-assured. She grew up working in the inn, and the merchants who stay at Sarruh's Rest all know her. Martinique has picked up a strong romantic streak from listening to the tales the guests tell. This streak has put her into her current predicament.

She does not know the surrounding area very well, because her father has always kept her too busy to spend much time exploring it. Besides, Martinique is no longer inclined to explore "that nasty old swamp."

Sarruh's Rest

The Sarruh's Rest Inn is firmly ensconced on a hilltop overlooking Vile's Fen. A large, sturdy sign by the side of the road announces the existence of the inn and has provided great comfort to many travelers. A long roadway leads up the steep hill to a fenced-in courtyard where two buildings await the weary guest: a red wooden barn for the travelers' steeds and the stone inn itself.

The inn was constructed in two sections. The southern wing of the L-shape is the original building that Golten built 20 years ago. Its single story serves as the kitchen, tavern, storage area, and servants' quarters.

Golten added the two-story northern wing to the inn seven years ago. It is made of the same stone as the older section and contains sleeping rooms for guests, as well as private quarters for Golten, his daughter, and the handyman, Devish. The lower floor is windowless and dark, but several shuttered windows make the top story light and breezy.

If the PCs decide to stay at the inn while they search the marsh for the mysterious singer, they will be charged the following rates per day:

Lodging
- Common room: 5 sp
- Private room: 1 gp

Stabling, any mount: 5 sp

Food and spirits
- Two meals per day (whatever is in the pot): 1 sp
- Special meal (fowl, beef with fresh bread, etc.): 5 sp to 1 gp
- Ale, 1 tankard: 5 cp
- Beer, 1 tankard: 3 cp
- Wine, local, 1 cup: 2 sp
- Wine, exotic, 1 cup: 3 gp

First Floor

The first floor of the inn is divided into two sections. The northern wing has a ceiling of 8′ and is not as drafty as the southern wing, though it has less character than the older section. Its materials still have a new, albeit slightly shabby, appearance that feels impersonal, almost institutional. The southern section of the inn is much cozier. Its floors are stained by the passage of many feet, its walls are dark with soot, sweat and smoke, and its ceiling is 10′ high.

The tavern is the busiest place in the inn. Devish, the handyman and bouncer of Sarruh's Rest, is almost always there, as is Golten himself. They keep the place neat and orderly, serve drinks, and help put to bed those guests who have imbibed too much. During the evening, there is a steady stream of travelers who sup and rest here. These travelers' individual statistics are left up to the DM. The PC can hear many interesting rumors in the tavern (see sidebar).

Devish, handyman: AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 65; leather armor, club (specialized: +1 to hit, +2 damage, 3/2 attacks); 6′ tall.

Devish is a 41-year old reformed alcoholic. He was once a young tough, working as an enforcer for a large thieves' guild. He was happy and well paid as a thug, using his skill with his club to earn his spirits. Eventually those same spirits brought him low and sapped his strength. In time, his drinking got to be such a problem that the guildmaster dismissed him and sent a couple of assassins to ensure that he did not utter any guild secrets.

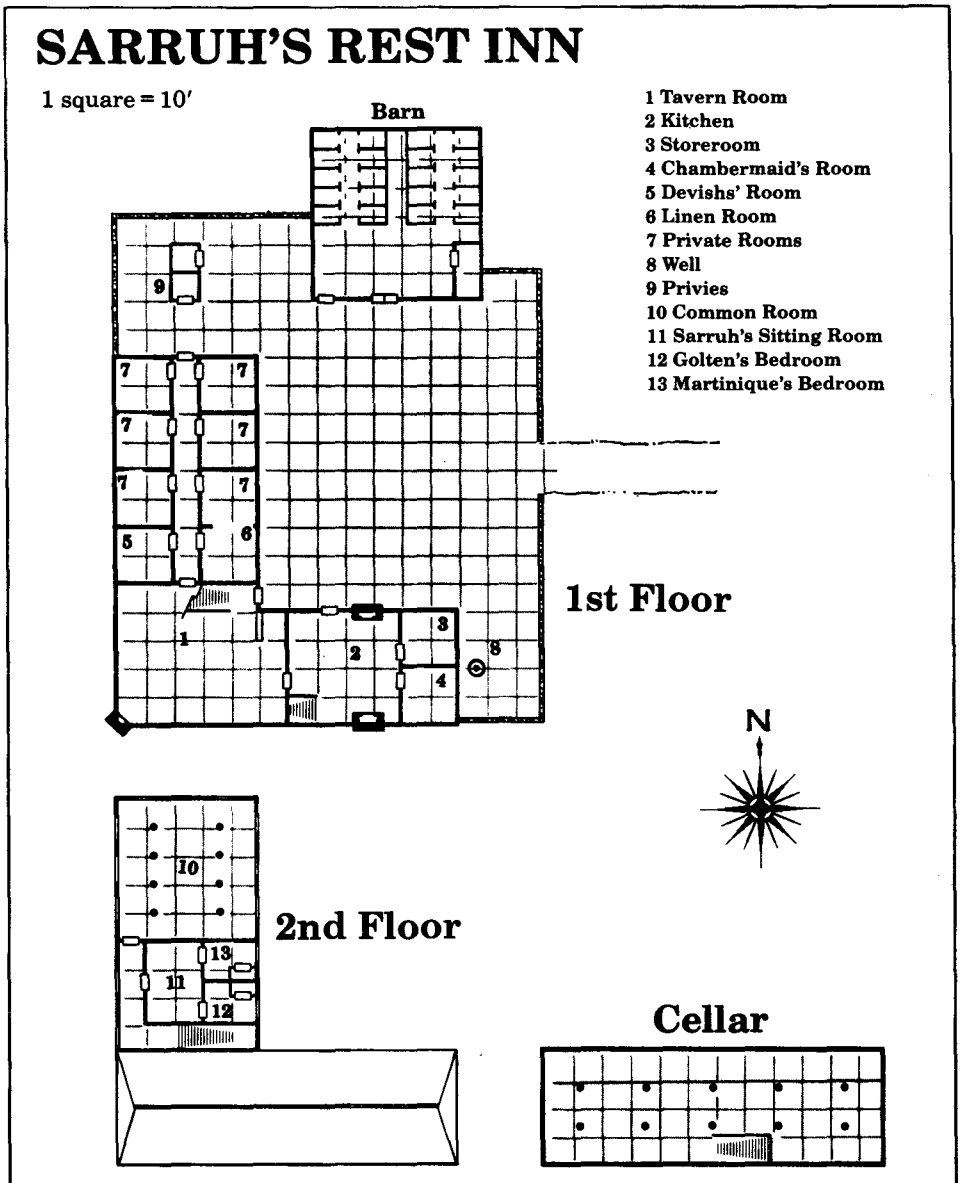
Fortunately for Devish, a passing wizard came to his aid when the killers attacked. While the wizard engaged the

Rumors At Sarruh's Rest

The PCs hear 1-3 of the following rumors during the course of one evening in the tavern at Sarruh's Rest. Roll 1d8 to determine which rumors they hear.

1. Vile's Fen is haunted. (True)
2. Vile, after whom the marsh was named, is an evil necromancer who still dwells in the heart of the fen. (False)
3. The singing is an evil spirit attempting to lure unwary travelers to their deaths. (False)
4. People who wander near Vile's Fen at night disappear. (Partially true; the ghouls get them.)
5. A mysterious figure has been seen floating across the fen lately. (Partially true; this was Wendall on his skiff.)
6. Golten is keeping his daughter locked up because she is suffering from a horribly disfiguring disease. (False; this rumor is spoken in a low whisper, well away from any employees.)
7. The mysterious singing is a trick of Golten's to attract more business. (False; this rumor is also spoken in a low whisper.)
8. Vile had a home on one of the hills of the fen and left horrid undead to guard it. (True)

SARRUH'S REST INN



assassins, Devish fled the city and ended up bleeding on the front stoop of Sarruh's Rest. Golten took him in, gave him a place to rest until his wounds healed, then helped him fight off his addiction. In gratitude, Devish happily became the handyman and bouncer at the inn.

Devish is also responsible for the distribution and collection of the room keys, which he keeps under the bar next to his iron-studded club. Devish carries no money on himself; his life savings (102 gp) are hidden in his room.

Golten Sarruh: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; dagger; 5'8" tall.

The owner and founder of the inn is portly, with a thick beard and long black hair salted with gray. He is both fair and kind, although he knows the value of a gold piece. He loves his daughter and is overprotective. He hopes and prays that she will marry Faranth, as he does not want her to end up as a scullery maid to some woodcutter or fisherman. The 5,000-gp dowry he offers goes a long way to ensure that his hopes for her will come true. Somewhere on the property, Golten has buried a large wooden chest containing all of his savings, a total of 5,234 gp.

Golten acts the perfect host. He does everything he can to ensure that his guests are comfortable and that they enjoy their stay. However, he is a very private person who does not welcome intrusions. If the PCs try to talk Golten into letting Martinique out of her room or letting her out of her marriage to Faranth, his manner turns cold. If they persist, he bluntly informs them that his daughter is none of their business and he "would be very happy to help them pack their baggage, as they are no longer welcome at this establishment."

If this pronouncement is made in the common room, the inn's guests quiet down and turn to stare at the PCs. If the adventurers are not willing to leave at this point, half of the regulars will offer to help Devish remove the PCs from the premises. Unless the PCs leave immediately, they will find themselves the focus of a tavern brawl. When it's all over, the PCs are cast out into the night.

It is unlikely that the PCs will be foolish enough to reach the point where a brawl breaks out. If it does, the quickest and easiest way to resolve the problem is to assume that the PCs are beaten unconscious and tossed out into the courtyard. Anything else is up to the individual DM.

Other inhabitants of the inn are Wilisa, Dagmar, and Greta, the three scullery maids and cooks. Wilisa is the chief cook, as she has been here the longest. She schemes to win Golten's heart so that she can become the mistress of the inn, but Golten will have none of it. She is certain that he will one day give in, so she keeps trying to win his affection. Dagmar is the prettiest and receives the most attention from the guests. Greta is the most ordinary of the three. She just does her job and moves on, never going out of her way to acknowledge the world around her.

The combined savings of the three maids is 17 cp, 24 sp, 5 ep, 72 gp, and 2 pp. The three keep this money hidden in their room behind the kitchen. The money is a combination of tips and saved salary.

Wilisa, Dagmar, and Greta: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; ML 10.

Second Floor

The ceiling throughout this floor of the inn is 8′ high. All windows are 3′ square and unglazed. A pair of slatted shutters keeps the elements out of each opening. The common room and the suite that make up Golten and Martinique Sarruh's private rooms are both located on this floor.

The common room is very simply made and furnished. Thick wooden beams sprout up throughout the room to support the roof, and shuttered openings look out onto the courtyard. Several rush cots here are rented out to poor or frugal wayfarers who stay at the inn.

By contrast, Golten and Martinique's suite is richly furnished in heavy wooden furniture, thick drapes and plush rugs. The suite's large room serves as a sitting room where the Sarruhs entertain important visitors. Golten's bedroom is sparsely decorated, containing only a wardrobe for clothes, a small closet, and a large canopied bed. Martinique has decorated her bedroom more lavishly than her father. Drapes and wall-hangings cover the walls, while a bed, nightstand, bureau, and wardrobe fill up the rest of the space. Because of her current situation, Martinique's room is not as neat as normal. In her fury and frustration, Martinique has strewn clothes and knickknacks onto the floor and over the tops of all the furniture, making it difficult to distinguish what's in the room.

In her built-in closet, Martinique has several dresses, skirts, and gowns and a large doll collection. These wooden dolls serve also as her jewelry box, as she uses their diminutive arms, necks, and heads to hold her collection of necklaces, bracelets and rings. This jewelry collection, while it appears impressive, is composed entirely of costume jewelry. The whole collection will bring no more than 25 gp. Martinique has little else of monetary value.

Unless the PCs are willing to risk Devish's club, the only safe way to reach this room is through the window. Martinique will not exit through the window unless she feels very secure about the method being used to lower her to the ground. Any loud noise from this room during the night alerts Golten next door, who sends Devish to investigate.

The Barn

There are two entrances to the barn, a great 15′ square sliding door for the animals and a smaller man-sized entrance for normal usage. The first floor contains horse stalls and two small rooms that serve as tack storage and living quarters for the stable hands, Vackin and Adnew. Several dogs and cats, none of them capable of anything but catching cats and mice, also dwell in the barn.

The second floor of the barn is used for grain and hay storage. These grains feed the mounts of the travelers who stay here, although the grain has also served as food for guests during lean times.

Vackin and Adnew are both young men who have taken jobs as stable hands because they don't have any better prospects. Their loyalty to Golten and the inn is not particularly strong; they will not lay down their lives to save it or him. They are quite competent grooms, and any steed placed in their hands will not suffer.

Vackin and **Adnew:** AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 4, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; knife.

Vile's Fen

Vile's Fen is a swampy marsh composed of mud bogs, thick sluggish creeks of silty water, cattail weeds, and low hummocks of trees and rocks. The marsh and the lake were carved out of the earth by a retreating glacier during a long-ago ice age, and the hummocks are the rocky deposits left behind. As time passed, the deep parts of the trough slowly became Lake Winnosett and the shallower parts became Vile's Fen.

Vile's Fen is named after Vile, an evil necromancer. This wizard kept a very small cottage on one of the hummocks that overlooks the lake. Because his experiments were hardly savory, and because his morals were below the level of his experiments, the local people left the marsh to him, even naming the unhappy place after him in order to warn others of his presence.

Fortunately, Vile's evil deeds eventually attracted the attention of a party of do-gooders who, after an exciting battle on the roof of his tower (which is some distance away from the marsh), managed to put an end to Vile's evil practices. Though the heroes razed his tower some 30 years ago, part of his evil lived on in the form of the undead that inhabited his summer cottage.

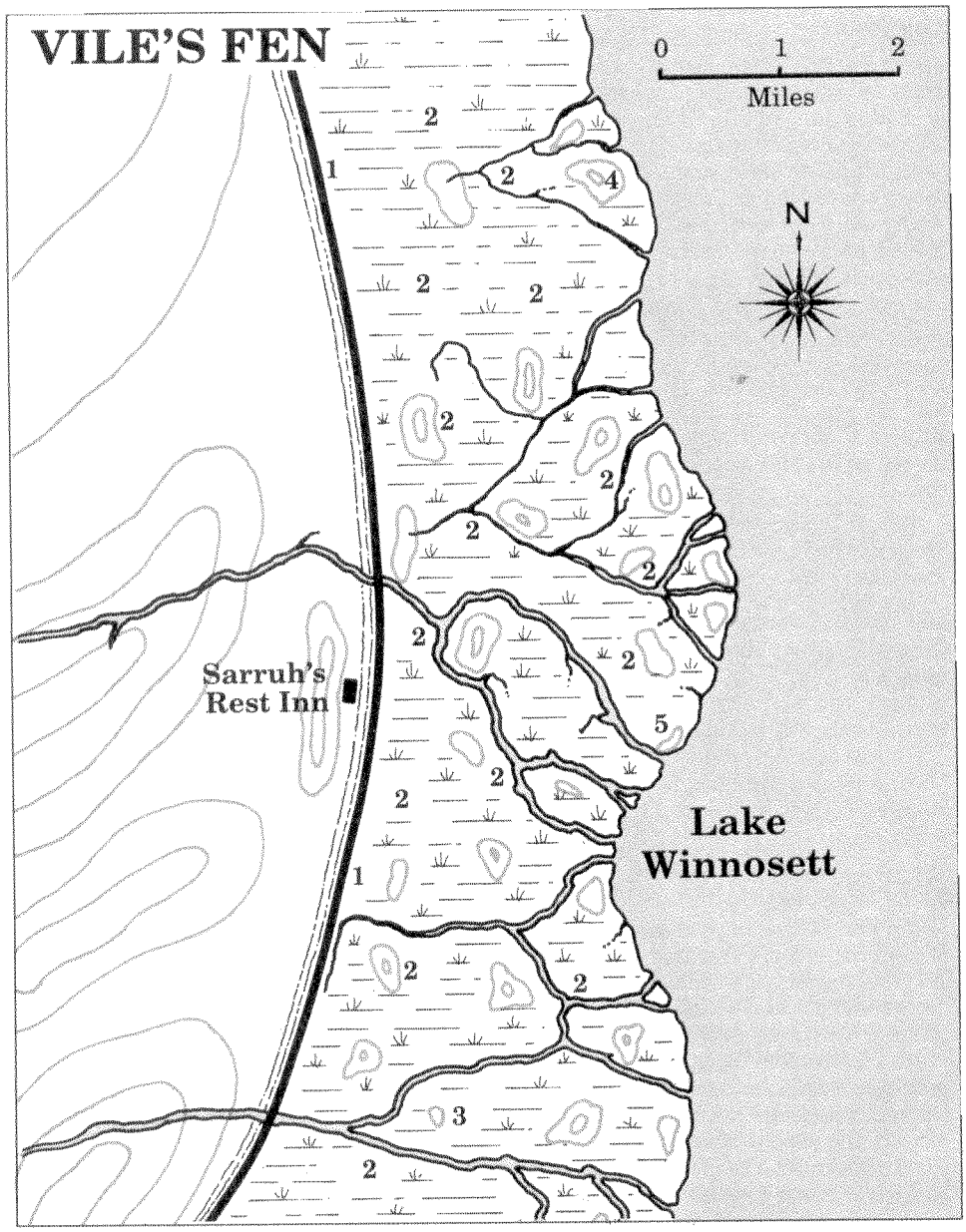
The zombies that Vile had created to guard the hummock continue to carry out their duties among the ruins of the cottage, while the more powerful undead that he commanded eventually managed to shake off his influence and go their own way. Only a small pack of ghouls remains in the fen, preying on occasional travelers from the road and catching and eating the small rodents that inhabit the marsh.

Many streams run through the fen, gradually draining toward the lake. Each creek is about 3′-4′ wide and 2′-3′ deep. They are clogged with silt and mud and flow very sluggishly. The streams' most endearing quality is that they are not overrun by the marsh grasses that are so rampant throughout the rest of the marsh and are therefore easily identifiable.

The hummocks scattered throughout Vile's Fen are a combination of boulders intermixed with very rich soil. Many nonmarsh plants grow on these small hills, and a thick layer of trees and underbrush covers each hummock. Because of the jumbled nature of the hills' creation, each contains several small pits, holes and caves. Most of these, however, are obscured by heavy growth and are not readily discernable.

Traveling in the fen is tricky at best. In addition to mud holes hidden by layers of dead weeds and matted marsh grass, the water level throughout the marsh is 2′-6′ deep. Beneath the water is another 2′-3′ of mud. To make matters worse, the cattails and marsh grasses grow 4′-6′ high. Because of this difficult terrain, it is suggested that the DM use the "Terrain Effects on Movement" rules on page 124 of the *DMG*. Using this system, movement in the fen is at half the normal rate. When the PCs are on the hummocks, they are no longer subject to the swamp movement penalty.

Finding Wendall as he travels the marsh will not be easy. Because of the watery ground, the darkness, and his skiff, it is impossible to use the tracking proficiency to find Wendall. Furthermore, because of the strange acoustics of the marsh, the PCs can't simply follow the music to its source. The hills, the water, and the dark combine to make Wendall's song untraceable; it seems just as loud 1,000′ from him as it does at 100′. Therefore, the PCs are



most likely to find him when he is in his lair, not when he is singing. For more information on Wendall, see area 5.

1. The Retaining Wall. This 7'-high wall is made of granite chunks and old field stone. It not only serves to maintain the road as a smooth and steady surface, but also helps to define the edge of Vile's Fen. Anyone dropping down into the marsh from this wall will discover that the mud is 6" deep under its watery blanket. The mud thins out after several hundred feet.

2. Mud Holes. These dangerous pits are death traps for the unwary. Each pit is a hole 5' in diameter and 10'-15' deep. They are well covered by silty water and matted dead reeds, and are very difficult to detect. If a PC moves without probing the ground ahead, the chance of noticing a hole is 1 in 8. If the PC slows down to half normal movement (which, combined with the optional terrain modifier, makes for a total movement rate of one-quarter normal) and checks the ground ahead with a stick or staff, the chances of finding the pits increases to 5 in 8. Of course, using a raft or skiff to travel the fen eliminates the need to worry about mud holes below the surface.

If a PC steps into a pit, he sinks in over his head in mud. If the PC is moderately or heavily encumbered, the PC must shed equipment to rise to the surface. Unless the PC is wearing plate mail, he can get out of his armor in one round (*Player's Handbook,* page 76) and the rest of his equipment in another round. If the PC is wearing plate mail, it takes 1d4 + 1 rounds to become unencumbered. A PC who falls into a pit is surprised and gets no chance for a good gulp of air. Therefore, he can hold his breath for only a number of rounds equal to one-sixth his Constitution, with a minimum of one round (*PH,* page 122).

An unencumbered PC can swim to the top of the mud at a rate of 5' per round. For each encumbrance category above unencumbered, this rate is reduced by 2' per round. Thus, a moderately encumbered adventurer simply sinks. A PC connected to others by a rope can easily be pulled out, if the PCs' have the strength to pull their comrade from the sucking mud (requires at least two people of halfling size or larger).

3. The Ghouls' Lair.

This hummock, covered with willow and ash trees, is riddled with tiny caves and cracks that are on average 6" in diameter and 6" to 1'-deep. After a brief search, you find a large willow tree with a 4'-wide hole under its hanging branches. A strong charnel smell rises from this pit, conjuring up visions of ancient graveyards. Small animal bones, their surfaces cracked and gnawed, litter the edges of the pit as if they had been casually tossed there by some great pack of ravenous predators.

Inside the hole is a 10'-wide, 15'-long, and 7'-high cavern, the lair of a pack of ghouls.

Ghouls (6): INT low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10, 9 (×2), 8, 6, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC1.

These horrible creatures are the remains of one of Vile's hideous experiment. He was so happy with the results that he planned to create a whole army of these undead, but he was slain before he could carry out his evil scheme. Nev-

ertheless, these ghouls still survive as a witness to his evil practices.

Because this pack of ghouls was not created by other ghouls (the usual method of ghoul creation), their behavior differs from the average ghoul. They strongly remember their human lives, and they are ashamed of what they have become. However, they cannot help succumbing to their ghoulish lusts. When their terrible hunger periodically overwhelms their shame, they attack and devour a late-traveling wayfarer on the road. Their struggle between shame and hunger results in very fearful and tentative behavior.

The ghouls also fear that they might encountering another wizard who will further warp and torture their souls. In combat, the ghouls always attack recognizable wizards first. If they paralyze a victim, they will ignore that PC until after the combat.

The ghouls attack only if they outnumber the party; if any of their members are struck down, they flee to their lair. If they are attacked in their lair, they fight for as long as their morale lasts. If their morale breaks, they throw themselves down in sobbing surrender. Because of their long residence in the fen, the ghoul's movement rates are not affected by terrain when they flee.

The ghouls have managed to collect some treasure from their victims over the last 30 years. They also, in a fit of vengeful rage, stripped Vile's cabin of anything truly valuable and added it to their own collection. The treasure amounts to 1,112 cp, 753 gp, three gems worth 100 gp and 10 gp (×2), a scroll of *protection from possession,* and a scroll with the spells *chill touch* and *feign death.* The treasure lies scattered in the northern part of the lair.

4. Vile's Cottage.

> This hummock is slightly higher than the surrounding hills. Its soil is sandy, providing useful footing for the first time since you entered the fen. A large willow tree stands at the top of the hill, its hanging branches protecting the underbrush that grows beneath it.
>
> The remains of an old wooden cabin rest just below the ring of vegetation, on the south side of the hummock. The cabin's three walls are draped in moss and you can see the hillside behind it through the open door. The stench of decaying flesh wafts out, followed by a lumbering group of moldy humanoids.

Zombies (8): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; MR special; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; MC1.

When Vile last left his cabin, these zombies were given orders to attack any living humanoid on the hummock. Since Vile's demise, they have continued to carry out his orders. They have no plan of attack or strategy; they just fight until there is no living humanoid on the hill, then return to the cabin. Thus, the zombies can easily be picked off by missile fire.

> Apparently once a one-room cabin, the inside of this structure is falling apart just as much as the outside. The back wall is completely missing, the door that used to protect the cabin from the elements is gone, and the roof in the northwest corner has collapsed completely. There are no furnishings or other indications that the cabin has ever been occupied.

There is nothing valuable in the cabin. The ghouls and the departing undead stripped the place in order to satisfy their own greed. The ghouls also destroyed all the furnishings in a fit of rage. The ghouls and any other undead are safe from the zombies' attacks because they do not qualify as "living humanoids."

5. Wendall's Lair. Wendall's lair is located within a hummock right on the edge of the lake. His small concealed cave looks south, giving Wendall a lakefront view. The cave mouth is concealed by a large bush, so consider the entrance a concealed door.

When the PCs have located the entrance to Wendall's lair, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Beyond the bush, a 7′-high cave extends 20′ into the hillside. It is barren and wet, with small patches of glistening lichen. Small animal bones are piled in the back of the cave, and a single great log, gray as driftwood, lies along the wall. A great green-skinned creature with long black claws and huge yellow

Random Encounters

This table should be consulted for every three turns that the PCs spend in Vile's Fen. An asterisk (*) indicates that this encounter cannot occur during daylight hours. To check for an encounter, roll 1d20.

1-2. **Ghouls*** (6): These evil creatures attack if they outnumber their opponents and they have surprised them, otherwise they flee. See area 3 for statistics.

3-5. **Giant leeches** (4-16): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 1; hp 4 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA drain blood, disease; SZ S (2′); ML 7; XP 65; MC2.

These horrid little bloodsuckers lie in wait in the mud and try to attach themselves to creatures that walk or swim near them. They always attack and have no treasure.

6-8. **No encounter.**

9-12. **Rats, common** (2-20): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15, swim 3; HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA disease; SZ T (1′ long); ML 3; XP 7; MC1.

These brown rats are the bottom of the food chain in the fen. They lair in the nooks and crannies of the hummocks. The rats do not attack anything larger than themselves unless they outnumber their prey by at least 10 to 1.

13-16. **No encounter.**

17-18. **Snake, poisonous** (1-3): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 9, swim 6; HD 2+1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S (5′ long); ML 8; XP 175; MC1.

These creatures are related to land-dwelling poisonous snakes. Although slow on solid ground, they are good swimmers. They eat brown rats and do not attack larger prey. If startled, they lash out to protect themselves. Their weak poison allows a saving throw at +3 and causes an incapacitating sickness for 2-8 days.

19-20. **Wendall*:** The troll is out in his skiff, poling along the waterways, singing, and looking for dinner. If the party is friendly, he will gladly speak with them. Otherwise, he defends himself and flees at the first opportunity. For more information, see area 5.

fangs leaps up at your approach and begins gibbering and capering about wildly.

Wendall (troll): INT average; AL CN; AC 4; MV 12 (6 in fen on foot, 9 in fen on skiff); HD 6+6; hp 13; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-12; SD regeneration; SZ L (7'); ML 14; XP 1,400; MC1.

Wendall is probably the shortest, scrawniest, weakest troll ever born. He doesn't particularly care for the joys of combat, having never met another troll he could best. He lacks much of the great strength of a normal troll, so his claw damage is less than other trolls'. The swamp's difficult terrain slows him down, but he uses a large skiff to pole himself through the swamp, allowing a movement rate of 9.

As Wendall grew up, he was attacked and insulted by other trolls because of his differences. Unlike other trolls, Wendall does not particularly enjoy rending and killing, although he is quite capable at it. Wendall also prefers the delicate taste of fish and green plants to live or bleeding meat. Finally, through some twist of ironic fate, Wendall has been endowed with the enchanting voice that has brought the PCs into the fen. Although he sings only in "trollspeak," his voice is so expressive that the intent of the song is apparent. This gift, combined with his abnormal behavior (abnormal for a troll) makes Wendall ill suited for troll life.

As soon as he was old enough and smart enough to survive on his own, he fled from the other trolls. Since then, Wendall has been wandering the wilds, looking for a place to call his own. He has found that place here in Vile's Fen. Not only are there plenty of grasses and fish to eat, but he has all of the space he wants to wander and sing, this being one of the few things that make him happy. He has an uneasy truce with the ghouls, as they cannot paralyze him and fear his strength. Wendall does not care to go to the trouble of tracking them down and slaying them as long as they leave him alone.

Wendall spends his nights wandering the streams of the fen on his skiff, singing, fishing, and generally having a good time. He spends his days in slumber in his lair, using his log as a pillow. Just outside the cave, Wendall keeps a small skiff and a 10' pole hidden under a pile of deadwood.

Unless the PCs immediately attack him, Wendall is more interested in talking than fighting. His speech is "trollspeak," but he is quite adept at pantomiming what he means. Wendall gestures to communicate and is as friendly as possible because he does not want trouble. If asked about the singing or the singer, he proudly points to his chest and grunt, "Wendall." If challenged, he will sing a few bars of a trollish drinking song, leaving no doubt that he is the mysterious singer of the marsh.

Play this part to the hilt. Try to communicate what Wendall is saying with wild gesticulations, heavy grunts, and as few words as possible. Remember that about 20% of his vocabulary is from Common and use this as a basis for hints if gestures fail.

Although Wendall seems very friendly (particularly for a troll), he is a dangerous companion. Years spent as the punching bag and spittoon of every troll he knew have seriously unbalanced him. His insanity manifests itself whenever Wendall feels that he has been insulted, rejected, threatened or attacked.

Whenever he feels picked on, Wendall becomes enraged, attacking the guilty party until it no longer moves. Anyone fleeing from the enraged troll is vigorously pursued. The only safe way to avoid Wendall's wrath is to play dead. Wendall assumes that anyone immobile really is dead, and he stops attacking.

While this insanity is no threat to other trolls, whose strong, wiry forms can easily defeat the scrawny Wendall, it's quite a different case when dealing with nontrolls. Therefore, anyone who deals with Wendall must do so very carefully. When playing out the encounter between the PCs and Wendall, pay close attention to what the PCs say to each other. If the tone of the comment is derogatory, Wendall becomes upset, perhaps even violent. Although he does not speak Common, Wendall's musical experience makes him very attentive to tones and inflections. His sensitive ears miss very little.

Delivering Martinique's Letter

If the PCs do not attack Wendall when they first encounter him, a romantically inclined party might try to give Martinique's letter to the troll. Because Wendall cannot read, it is up to the party to communicate the sentiment and contents of the letter. While Martinique's words do not make a particular impression upon him, the blue hair ribbon strikes Wendall's fancy. If the PCs give the ribbon to Wendall, he agrees to travel to Sarruh's Rest to meet Martinique.

If the party is more realistically inclined, once they discover that the singer is a troll, they are unlikely to deliver Martinique's letter. In this case, Martinique will scarcely believe the party when they describe the true identity of her mysterious singer. Even if the PCs convince Martinique of Wendall's race, she will get a determined look on her face and strongly request that the PCs convince him of her love.

Her reasoning, influenced by the romantic stories that she has heard, is that anyone who can sing so sweetly must be an enchanted prince under some wicked spell. Only a beautiful maiden can release him from his curse, or so she believes. Using this logic, Martinique does her best to cajole the party into returning to the swamp and delivering the letter and hair ribbon and then convincing the troll to come visit her.

If the PCs fight Wendall when they first meet him but live to tell the tale, or if they refuse to aid Martinique a second time, Martinique asks for her letter and hair ribbon back. She thanks the PCs for their efforts but asks them not to interfere because "surely you have done enough already." When other travelers come to the inn, she asks them to deliver the letter and token for her. The PCs should consider themselves free of any obligation that they might have felt.

Troll Meets Girl

Wendall will meet Martinique on two conditions. First, it must be night, as the sunlight hurts his eyes. Second, any meeting must be held outside, as he fears going inside buildings; it might be a trap. If the PCs agree to these conditions, Wendall will gladly travel with them.

Once the PCs and Wendall arrive at the inn, they must get Martinique's attention without waking up everyone in the building. They must also get her out of her room. These problems are left up to the PCs' ingenuity to solve; Wendall is not interested in going beyond the entrance to the courtyard.

If the PCs get bogged down here, the DM might consider dropping a few

hints. For instance, the most straightforward way to get Martinique out would be for a thief to climb up the wall to Martinique's window, then carry her down to the courtyard.

A diversion elsewhere in the inn might also work. Once everyone in the inn is distracted by a smoky pile of wet hay or a phantom burglar, party members could swoop in and liberate Martinique from her room.

A more exciting proposition might be to convince Golten that Wendall really *is* a prince under a horrible spell. The party could even try to teach Wendall some courtly ways. Excellent manners on Wendall's part, combined with some fast talking by the PCs and a beautiful song or two, might be enough to convince Golten to allow Martinique out of her room to see Wendall, albeit under the watchful eyes of both Golten and Devish.

Any of these options will work with a little forethought and planning. The PCs may come up with something totally different but just as good. The important thing to remember is to adjudicate the PCs' plans fairly.

Once Martinique is out of her room and Wendall sees her lithe form and simple grace, he begins to softly croon a beautiful song about her. Wendall cannot help being smitten by Martinique, who he perceives as beautiful "despite her humanity." At the sight of her, his trollish soul is seized by a possessive lust.

Martinique's reaction is quite different. Seeing the slimy, green, scaly object of her affection, she screams loudly and faints. Her scream sets the dogs to barking, and the noise wakes Adnew and Vackin immediately, followed by the rest of the inn. Everyone rushes out into the courtyard and is promptly brought up short by the sight of the troll.

Wendall responds poorly to Martinique's screams. In his dim way, he realizes that Martinique is horrified by his appearance. This makes him think that the PCs have tricked him into coming so that they could make fun of him. This is his weak spot, and Wendall goes berserk. He launches himself at the nearest PC and fights until his foes stop moving or he is beaten into unconsciousness. If Wendall defeats the party, he flees back to his lair.

None of the inn's residents get involved in the ensuing melee unless the PCs are in dire trouble. Then, at Golten's request, Devish takes up his club in defense of the party. Because of his normally passive behavior, Wendall does not attack the other residents of the inn unless they attack him. Martinique has fainted, so Wendall assumes that she is dead and so does not attack her.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the battle with Wendall is over, Golten tries to sort things out. Although he is suspicious of his daughter's presence out in the courtyard, Golten is so relieved at finding her unharmed that he forgives the PCs for any past transgressions. If the PCs defeat Wendall, but some part of him manages to survive, the troll returns to his lair to recuperate before leaving Vile's Fen forever. Golten may assume that Wendall has taken up residence in his lair again and may try to hire the PCs to finish the job and drive off the troll.

If Wendall defeats the PCs, Golten does what he can for the survivors, including giving them a free place to stay while they heal. Golten also offers to give the dead a decent burial at no cost. If the PCs seem up to engaging Wendall again, Golten will do what he can to aid them. He sends Devish to give the party some extra firepower if they were greatly outclassed by their first encounter with the troll.

If Wendall escapes from the party, either as victor or survivor, he returns to his lair to gather up his belongings. His recent encounter with humanity has increased his desire to be alone. As a result, he abandons his home to travel deeper into the wilds, looking for someplace where he can sing without fear of attracting attention. If the party returns to his former lair, all they find is an empty cave.

Martinique is drastically changed by her experiences with Wendall. When Faranth returns from his tournament, he finds her eager about the prospect of marriage. She is so enthusiastic about it, in fact, that Faranth also catches the "marriage bug." They get married within the month.

Finally, if the PCs managed to defeat Wendall and are looking for more things to do in the area, the DM can always place some clue to the necromancer Vile's original whereabouts. Perhaps some scrap of parchment that hints at the location of the wizard's tower escaped the wrath of the ghouls. While only the zombies and ghouls remain in the swamp, who knows what dwells in the remains of his old tower? Ω

KHAMSA'S FOLLY

BY J. MARK BICKING

Whom gods destroy, they destroy completely.

Artwork by David O. Miller

Mark writes: "I'm still wearing many hats, working as a technical writer, newspaper columnist, and short-story writer. My wife, Brenda, suggested Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ozymandias" as the inspiration for a module, and "Khamsa's Folly" is the result. Thanks, Brenda."

"Khamsa's Folly" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure for a well-equipped party of 6-8 player characters of levels 4-6 (about 35 total levels). The PCs should be of primarily good alignments. A smaller party of higher-level PCs is also appropriate.

This adventure is set in the desolate desert of Raurin, located in one of the most remote reaches of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, southeast of the Sea of Fallen Stars and far from the heavily populated Heartlands. If you intend to expand the Southern Realms for campaign play, you may wish to obtain a copy of FORGOTTEN REALMS accessory FR10 *Old Empires*. This supplement provides helpful history and background detailing the lands surrounding the desert of Raurin, and includes complete descriptions of the new spells and monsters used in this adventure. In this adventure, southern magic spells are marked with an asterisk (*) and are detailed at the end of the adventure.

Though designed for the Forgotten Realms, this module can be adapted for most campaigns. While best suited for a region whose inhabitants worship the Egyptian pantheon, the cursed temple at the heart of this adventure can be placed in any desert, provided that the features of the unusual landscape are duplicated.

Dungeon Masters running the I3-5 *Desert of Desolation* campaign series, which is also set in the Raurin desert of the Forgotten Realms, may wish to revise this adventure to utilize the temple as the location of one of the star gems.

Adventure Background

Most inhabitants of the Realms know little of the mysterious southern lands known as the Old Empires, for the natives who live there prefer it that way. Legends from the obscure, ancient South are shadowy at best, and most adventurers wisely skirt these inhospitable foreign lands. The collective nations of the South are considered a

"slumbering giant," a world of strange and exceptionally powerful magic and political intrigue.

Life in the South justifies this superstition and dread, for it is a world where the distinction between god and man has become blurred. At the end of the previous age, over 4,000 years ago, the mighty human kings Re and Enlil, discontent with the vast span of their empires, waged a great war with the gods for supremacy. Such was the extent of their might that the monarchs emerged after lengthy, bloody conflicts as god-kings. But their triumph was a tremendously costly one, for the land was razed by the gods, who sought retribution. Their homeland of Raurin a shattered, barren ruin, Re and Enlil led their surviving subjects northwest to the lands that are now the nations of Unther, Chessenta, and Mulhorand, on the southern shore of the Sea of Fallen Stars.

What is forgotten about the age, save for puzzling local folklore, is that the two god-kings were not alone in their desire to achieve sovereignty over the gods; however, they were alone in their success. Other, less formidable rulers sought to supplant the gods, only to be crushed like ants beneath a boot heel. Most dismiss these tales as myth, but proof is quite evident for those brash enough to search the land where this failure took place.

Khamsa was one such ruler: a bloated, toadlike king whose rule over a section of Raurin predated that of Re and Enlil. Today, nomads in the region use the phrase "Khamsa's Folly" as a parable to chastise excessive pride, for though little is remembered of his rule, the very mention of his name humbles the most boastful of men. According to legend, Khamsa's conceit soared so excessively that he descended into madness, rejecting the known gods as false, abolishing their worship, and proclaiming his own divinity. This brought the gods' ire upon him, for nothing is more likely to stir the anger of the gods than a claim of superiority over them. Re and Enlil later profited from Khamsa's example, for they built great armies of warriors and wizards in anticipation of this revenge. Khamsa, instead, sapped the vitality of his people for his own personal glorification.

The Flail and the Circlet

As Khamsa's power grew, he waged war with a number of neighboring kingdoms in an effort to expand the breadth of his domain. In one such battle, Khamsa slew a priest wielding the *flail of the desert kings*, a powerful artifact (see sidebar). The dying priest defiantly spat a curse through bloodied lips as Khamsa tore the flail from his rigid, twisted grasp. The priest's *bane** spell cursed the flail forever and sealed Khamsa's fate.

Triumphant in his acquisition, Khamsa was oblivious to the evil smile that creased the face of the priest, who died content that his curse on the flail would bring him revenge from beyond the grave. When Khamsa donned the *circlet of the adder*, the priest's snakelike headpiece, the flail revealed its powers and the curse began its evil course. The priest's vengeance came swiftly.

Unaware of the influence of the flail, the maddened king ordered his subjects to build an ornate temple out of the rock of a cliff overlooking his kingdom, where his divinity and power over the gods would be acknowledged in an elaborate benediction.

It is said that Khamsa squandered the riches of an age in constructing the palace, which further incensed the gods, for the spirit of a once great and proud people was drained in the effort. A society that had reached unparalleled levels of knowledge and prosperity, and had pioneered new developments in agriculture, philosophy, and the arts, was reduced to beggary by the avaricious aims of a heretic. Nonetheless, most of Khamsa's subjects followed his commands, whether through legitimate worship or fear for their lives, and the spurned gods plotted reprisals against both the people and their monarch for their sacrilege.

No deity was more wrathful than lawful-evil Set, something of an outcast among the gods. Known as the Father of Jackals and Brother of Serpents, this fiercely evil being had challenged the authority of the other deities for leadership of the pantheon and had been defeated. Already humiliated by this development, he reacted violently to Khamsa's attempt to usurp his authority, and his reprisals were vicious. As the human king proceeded in his ill-fated enterprise, Set methodically developed plans for a series of catastrophes to punish the king.

Life Imitates Art

As the centerpiece of his temple, Khamsa commissioned Estrias, one of the Realms' foremost artisans, to produce the most lifelike statue of him possible. To Khamsa's disturbed mind, it would be a work of magnificent aesthetic qualities. Estrias' amazingly realistic works had prompted hushed rumors of black magic, gossip further reinforced by the artisan's odd appearance and habits and his demand for complete secrecy.

Bald and slouched as if from great age, the artisan nonetheless had a youthful, almost boyish face with hypnotic eyes that burned with the icy fire of fanaticism. He allowed no visitors in his workshop, chasing off the curious with threats and curses. Yet many hoped to learn his secrets, and those who dared remain to spy on his work found themselves assaulted by serpents that poured from the workshop like evil, twisted raindrops.

Ultimately, the public gave Estrias a wide berth, and his odd traits were dismissed as artistic eccentricities, but those who suspected a supernatural influence were closer to the truth than most ever knew. While Estrias' artwork was a result of standard procedures, he was indeed a dabbler in the dark arts and a devoted follower of Set. Much to his delight, he became a tool in that deity's revenge.

Even men of magic have certain material needs, and the promise of a roomful of gold upon completion of his commission lured Estrias away from his other activities. The mysterious foreigner unwisely took Khamsa at his word, laboring tirelessly for many months to create an incredible likeness that, even with idealized features to conceal many of Khamsa's unflattering attributes, hit too close to home.

Enraged over the clearly ungodlike depiction, Khamsa smashed the masterwork to powder while the stunned artisan looked on. Estrias was further humiliated when he was forced to prostrate himself in front of the megalomaniac, begging for his life even as Khamsa, froth dripping from his pudgy lips, called for the sculptor's head.

Estrias' groveling was so pathetic, and Khamsa's susceptibility to sycophants so complete, that the mad king chose to spare him. The artisan, claiming that no earthly powers could adequately depict a god, assured Khamsa

The *Flail of the Desert Kings*

This potent magical weapon, the creation of a southern mage in ancient times, is a foot-long rod of gold wrapped with inlaid bands of lapis lazuli, ending in three loosely swinging 6" bars of ivory tipped with turquoise. It appears to be a nonmagical artifact of superb craftsmanship and great value but radiates a faint dweomer of magic if detection spells are cast on it.

Originally just a pharaoh's symbol of rulership, a wizard later enchanted it to bolster a young, unproven pharaoh's leadership when his kingdom teetered on the brink of collapse. The resourceful mage gave the item powers that could be activated only by an individual wearing the *circlet of the adder*. The young ruler used the items to rally his subjects to a frenzy of devotion, and his power grew phenomenally.

The flail and circlet were passed from pharaoh to pharaoh through the ages until Khamsa, the warlike leader of the neighboring kingdom of Raurin, slew the current pharaoh in battle and claimed the artifacts for his own. As he lay dying, the conquered pharaoh, a priest of considerable power, cast a *bane** spell on the circlet so that anyone using it to activate the flail's powers would suffer a troubled fate.

As a fulfillment of the curse, Khamsa was seized with *delusional insanity* (see the AD&D® 1st Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 83) that intensified each time the item was used. Eventually convinced he was a deity, Khamsa challenged the gods and was turned to stone by their vengeance. The circlet was frozen in place on Khamsa's brow, and the flail was eventually borne away from the haunted halls of the south, forgotten except in scribbled legends in aged tomes.

The flail passed through the lives of a succession of owners over the centuries, and misfortune universally befell those unfortunate enough to come in contact with it. This may be mere coincidence, for the flail itself is not actually cursed and in fact can be used as a +2 weapon. However, the flail's owner is sometimes faced with a strange desire to find the object that belongs with the flail; few owners of the weapon ever learned precisely what they were looking for, and this mysterious quest proved agonizing.

When wielded by an individual wearing the *circlet of the adder*, the flail is similar to a *rod of lordly might*. Usable by a fighter or cleric, it grants the wielder the following powers:

*Stormvoice**: This southern magic spell enables the caster to speak with the voice of a storm, which causes him to be heard at 10 times the normal distance. All creatures within 20' of the caster must roll saving throws vs. spells or be knocked to their feet and deafened for 1-4 rounds. This ability expends one charge.

Drain: This ability takes an additional 2-8 hp from opponents struck by the flail and bestows them on the wielder (up to his maximum). It uses one charge.

*Worship**: This southern magic spell raises the effective charisma of the flail's wielder to 22. Creatures of 3 HD (or levels) or less who are in clear view of the caster automatically fall to their knees and praise the wielder. Creatures of 4-6 HD (or levels) are entitled to a saving throw, and those above 6 HD are unaffected. Unwilling victims must roll a reaction check (with a +8 penalty) when the spell is finished. This ability uses two charges.

Unlike a *rod of lordly might*, the flail does not have mundane powers. It can be recharged, but only by a mage proficient in southern magic, someone virtually impossible to find outside of the Raurin desert region. The flail has 17 charges remaining.

The *Circlet of the Adder*

The circlet is a thin, golden snakelike headpiece that winds around the wearers' scalp and turns up at the brow like an attacking cobra. It radiates faint magic when within 10' of the flail, but its enchantment is active only in the presence of the flail. Its only function is to unlock the flail's powers for its wielder.

The headpiece still carries the curse placed on it thousands of years ago, a *bane** spell that consumes the mind of any individual using the circlet to unlock the flail's powers. Using the circlet to activate the flail curses the user with delusional insanity. Anyone suffering from this affliction believes himself to be a monarch or even a god. Victims are instantly hostile to those who fail to recognize their glory and are seized with a desire to use the flail's powers to punish unbelievers. Pursuing greater power becomes the owner's sole preoccupation.

The circlet can be removed from the head of the wearer, breaking its hold on him, though the wearer will never allow this. The only way to break the curse is to destroy the circlet utterly.

that bolstering his skill with magic could result in artwork worthy of his demands. The king ordered his subjects to provide the sculptor with all of the materials and secrecy he required to succeed.

Estrias' hidden agenda was to avenge himself, and he took great satisfaction in the knowledge that he met this end with Khamsa's unknowing aid. The artisan called on Set for assistance in gaining revenge. What dark bargain the artisan made is long forgotten, but the pact was effective. Set and his follower became partners in the artisan's duplicity, for Estrias' motives coincided with those of the gods, who wished to punish the blaspheming Khamsa in a cataclysm that would stand as a permanent reminder to the world.

Set answered the sculptor's appeals with a statuette that would form into a greater medusa when a command word was spoken. Estrias' wild, maniacal laughter filled his chamber as he considered the rich irony of Set's gift.

Violent storms on the scheduled day of Khamsa's deification ceremony were a harbinger of the terrible events to come. Those few individuals who had remained faithful to the gods were warned and fled Raurin to take refuge. The majority of Khamsa's subjects, however, remained oblivious to the dreadful fate that awaited them. As the storms raged over the kingdom, Estrias spoke the command word and anticipated his vengeance.

The ceremony was one of great pageantry as Khamsa, resplendent in his finest garments, bore an expression that was the epitome of imperious disdain. As the proceedings came to a climax, Estrias led a procession of the kingdom's strongest warriors, who labored with a burden on their broad shoulders. A large, highly decorated case was placed before the monarch with a flourish from the royal musicians.

But the soaring tones of the musicians were interrupted by violent cracking as the creature within the case broke free to enact Set's revenge. The scowling despot's reaction of surprise and anguish was preserved forever by the medusa's gaze attack, fulfilling Khamsa's wish by creating the most lifelike image of him imaginable. The flail dropped from Khamsa's grasp as the attack took place, and the circlet was frozen in place beneath the stone of his petrified head.

A nightmarish scene of chaos ensued as Khamsa's hysterical subjects attempted to flee the temple. Those who were not trampled or turned to stone fell victim to the remaining components of Set's curse.

The Great Cataclysm

Even as the ceremony was taking place, death blew down from the heavens like some great pestilence. The kingdom, already pressed to the limits by the demands of Khamsa's construction, had been held together against the relentless press of the swirling desert winds only by the vitality of the people. But Set's wrath destroyed the mighty kingdom in a matter of minutes, and no subject within the temple survived the devastation.

Set's plagues were truly grisly. The first was the mass arrival of his "children" at the entrance to the temple. Hundreds of deadly snakes, each a true monster, swarmed upon the fleeing people. Few subjects remained after this initial attack, but the plans of the evil deity were far from complete. Khamsa's kingdom, once lush and fertile, became a twisted wasteland as hostile elementals blew over the land in a deadly dance. A group of skriaxit—vast, living sandstorms—slowly buried the valley while seeking out living beings to destroy. Fire elementals charred and blackened the cliffs and surrounding soil. The dark romp of the sandstorm and fire elementals continued into the night, and the mystical creatures did not depart until every living being outside the temple was destroyed and the land was consumed.

Though not a single inhabitant of the kingdom survived the sandstorm, one final catastrophe followed. An intense wave of searing heat engulfed the land, evaporating rivers and lakes in vast clouds of steam, and creating two unique geographic features (see "Across the Desert of Curses").

Protected by Set from the disaster occurring outside, the greater medusa remained behind, fashioning a lair below the temple and sleeping through the centuries. Worshipped as a high priestess by Set's followers, she is fed a regular diet of victims by Set's minions, who roam the barren region in search of prey (see the "Random Encounters" sidebar).

Estrias the artisan, his revenge complete, seized the *flail of the desert kings* and proceeded to plunder all that he and his packhorse could carry from Khamsa's treasury. Also protected by Set from the plagues, he then departed. Realizing that his control over the medusa was limited and eager to avoid becoming one of the beast's victims, he never returned.

Frustrated by his inability to recover the circlet from the petrified king, Estrias died without learning how to unlock the flail's powers. The item changed hands many times over the centuries, carried north under the cloak of the murky night, and was eventually lost.

The abandoned temple stands today as a monument to the foolishness of Khamsa's arrogance. Only the summit of the building remains in view, luring occasional thieves spellbound by the legends' references to Khamsa's treasury within. All those resolute enough to enter have fallen victim to the medusa's gaze, if they survived long enough to meet her; the temple is otherwise shunned as a cursed place. The wise avoid the structure, because it is occupied by a variety of deadly creatures in Set's service, who have claimed the temple for their god.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

How the *flail of the desert kings* comes into the possession of the PCs is up to the DM. If it is placed in a treasure horde in an adventure preceding this one, emphasize the exotic nature and superb craftsmanship of the flail to intrigue the PCs and convince them to keep it. The value of the item from the standpoint of raw materials alone should be enticing to the PC.

Once the PCs acquire the item, they immediately draw the attention of Paphoset, a self-exiled priest of Set who has become obsessed with the flail and circlet and has cast a series of divinatory spells to locate the weapon. His discovery of the item's whereabouts triggers a series of intrigues that embroil the PCs in this adventure.

Treachery and deceit are the hallmarks of the followers of Set, and Paphoset truly distinguished himself in that regard, rising quickly through the ranks of Set's priesthood. However, he earned numerous influential and ruthless enemies during his rapid climb, and his rivals among the ranks of Set's priesthood became a menacing prospect. After surviving several assassination attempts (and methodically avenging the attacks), Paphoset fled into the desert, eager to establish a following of his own.

Pouring over dusty, ancient tomes bound in hides of vile creatures thankfully extinct, Paphoset uncovered passages on a number of magical items created in forgotten times. Convinced that possession of these items could assure the success of his scheme, the priest consumed his days and nights with an exhausting search for the artifacts. The location of the *circlet of the adder* on Khamsa's petrified body was revealed quickly because of his proximity to the temple, but that discovery proved frustrating to a follower of Set all too aware of the temple's occupants.

The search for the other items proved more difficult and time consuming, and the process took its toll on the priest, who neglected his body in his unrelenting chase. Yet his diligence was rewarded when the location of the *flail of the desert kings* came into focus, many leagues from the desert in the possession of a small band of adventurers.

Dealing with this group seemed easy enough, but their distance and Paphoset's ill health presented a roadblock to his goal as vexing as the location of the circlet. Poring over the problem, the priest was seized with diabolical inspiration that enabled him to solve both problems simultaneously. He devised a scheme that would compel the adventurers to travel to Raurin to deliver the flail to him and slay the medusa in the process.

Aware that his days are numbered if he remains in the South, Paphoset is playing his last hand, even to the point of alienating his god, who displays virtually no loyalty to even his most resolute followers once they leave his order. Though his prayers for spells have not gone unfulfilled, Paphoset has sensed a reluctance on the part of his deity, indicating that his power and potential for advancement are on the wane, and he has been compelled to perform an act of desperation. Set is not conscious of Paphoset's plans, but the priest is horrified by the prospect of the violent reprisal that will doubtlessly follow the discovery of his betrayal if he remains in Raurin.

Convinced that the flail and circlet can provide him with the only power he

needs, the priest hopes to recover the items and flee north, away from the vengeful deity and his minions. If his plans succeed, the PCs will destroy the medusa or provide a diversion that will enable the priest to steal the circlet and flail and escape.

Upon his discovery of the adventurers' possession of the flail, Paphoset plagues them with dreams and other attempts to lure them to the desert of Raurin, posing as the spirit of an ancient pharaoh whose rest has been cursed by the theft of the object the PCs possess. These dreams, hurled across the vastness of the Realms by strange and powerful magical items and spells, are inescapable and recurrent, and are followed by a *call** spell, a southern magic variant of the *gate* spell.

For each casting, this spell attracts the attention of a single PC, who hears himself summoned by a disembodied but commanding voice. Drawn by a vision of the area the *call** spell is cast from, the PC is free to accept or reject the summons. If the summons is refused, the *gate* instantly disappears and the spell is silenced. However, Paphoset is persistent, and the *call** is renewed each day, accompanied by more intense dreams each time. If the *call** is accepted, the target is immediately *teleported without error* to the *call*'s general location.

The DM should ensure that the PCs are together when the dreams and visions are received, so that the PC accepting the summons and entering the *gate* can be joined by his companions. If the PCs accept the summons, they are instantly transported to the desert of Raurin, where Paphoset will trail them secretly, awaiting an opportunity to set his plans to work.

If the PCs attempt to get rid of the flail, Paphoset will intensify the dreams to such an extent that the group will feel compelled to regain it and deliver it to the "pharaoh." These dreams should appeal primarily to PCs of good alignments by attempting to convince them to undertake the journey to restore the land.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Since your discovery of the curious golden flail, your lives have been thrown into chaos. Each night has been a restless ordeal, haunted by vivid, unforgettable dreams. The nightmare never varies: Across the gulfs of time and space, your consciousness shifts to a strange, foreign land where desert sands swirl against a temple hewn into blackened rock. An authoritative voice, its source hidden within the shadowy confines of the structure, calls to you.
>
> "Friends, my sleep is as troubled as your own. Centuries ago, blasphemers shattered the fragile tranquility of my afterlife, and blight seized my homeland in its evil grasp. Once I ruled a lush and bountiful kingdom. None of my subjects knew poverty or unhappiness. Upon my death, my followers toiled to create this blessed place, and sent me on my journey to the afterworld.
>
> "But under cloak of darkness, tomb robbers invaded my temple and defiled my sarcophagus, interrupting my voyage. Among the objects stolen from my gravesite was the artifact you now possess. The theft of the sacred flail of the desert kings was a truly disastrous omen, for the presence of the flail and the vitality of the kingdom are linked forever. When the flail was seized, crops withered, rivers dried, and my people abandoned their homes to avoid starvation. Not until the flail is returned to my burial place will the health of this nation be restored.
>
> "Fate has borne the flail of the desert kings into your hands, so that you might deliver my kingdom from its affliction.
>
> "Return the flail . . . restore my land."
>
> The voice fades, and you awaken with jolting suddenness.

Over the course of a week, each of the PCs experiences the same dream. Emphasize to the players that the dreams are so consuming that the PCs spend their days preoccupied with attempts to obtain more details. However, pursuing clues will be extremely frustrating; because of the item's age and exotic nature, it is unlike any item most experts have ever seen. It is resistant to *identify* spells due to its hidden powers (see sidebar). If the PCs can cast *legend lore* or a similar spell, or if they seek information from an exceptionally resourceful (and expensive) sage, they can uncover the following verse, which provides further clues about the *circlet of the adder* and the hidden powers of the flail:

> In the South a crown of gold
> Rests on a hairless head.
> Once Khamsa made the world behold
> And upon the mighty tread.
>
> He who wields the pharaoh's flail
> Shall rest upon a throne.
> Find its mate, from head to tail
> Lost in living stone.

A day after all PCs have experienced the dream, the adventurers are startled by a violent humming, and the appearance of what appears to be a *gate* through which they catch glimpses of the desert landscape and temple from their dreams. The phrase "Deliver the flail. Restore my kingdom" echoes compellingly from within, spoken by a disembodied voice.

The adventurers are not bound to accept the invitation. If they refuse, the *call** disappears suddenly, only to reappear once per day until each PC has received the invitation. The *call** is then suspended, only to reappear again a week later as the pattern repeats itself. Remember Paphoset's singlemindedness and persistence in these attempts to persuade the adventurers.

If the PCs accept the *call** and enter the *gate,* read or paraphrase the following:

> Wrapped in a dizzying swirl of incandescent colors and unfamiliar sounds, you find yourselves dumped suddenly on a strange, barren desert plain. You note with relief that your possessions are intact, but that peace of mind is broken by the realization that nothing about your surroundings is familiar in any way. Grains of purple dust bite at your exposed flesh and choke your already labored breathing. An oppressive, broiling sun burns down on an endless sea of sand, and no features other than vast rolling dunes are within sight.
>
> Wandering aimlessly through the open wasteland, you are battered by intermittent sandstorms and the pulsing desert heat for nearly two days. As night begins to fall, promising the onset of another strangely chilling evening, you catch a glimpse of palms on the horizon. Your mind races, dismissing the vision as a trick

of the desert sun, but as you draw closer you realize that an oasis sits amid the dunes, welcoming you. Beyond the oasis, a taunting, strangely familiar vision wavers in the distance.

Into the Desert

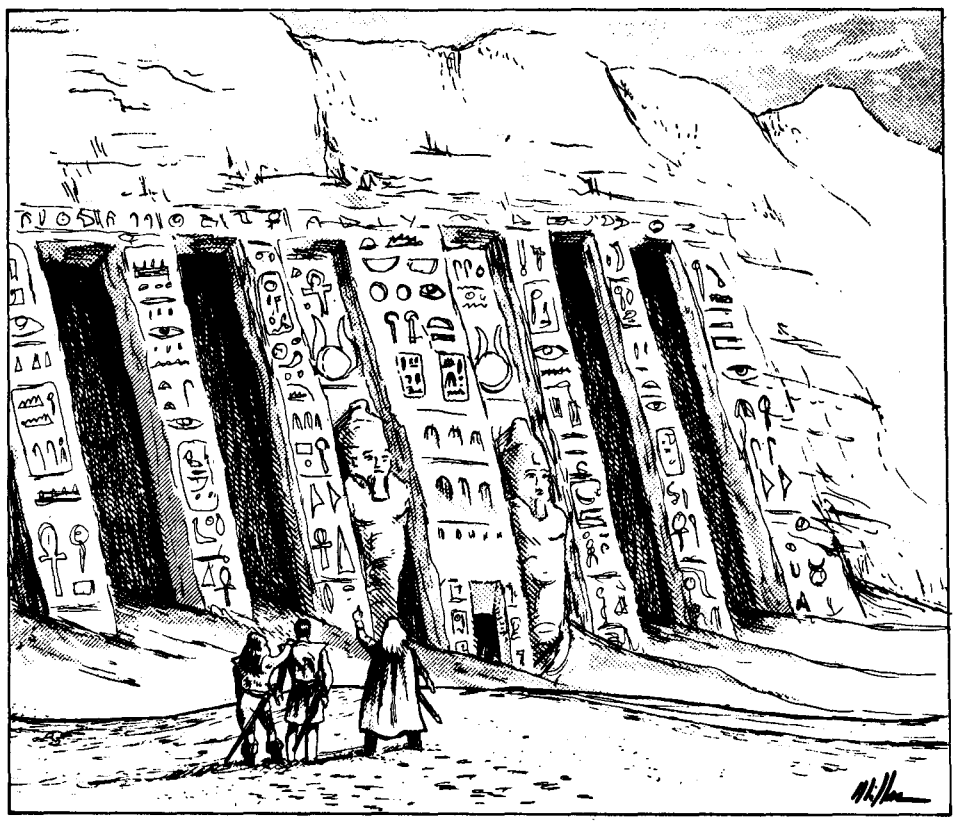
A. Oasis. If the PCs attempt to abandon their quest and possess the means to escape the hazards of the desert trek, Paphoset may interfere covertly to prevent this from happening. He steers the party in the direction of the oasis, aware that a healthy, rested group is essential to his plan to gain the circlet. The Oasis of the Bubbling Pool offers the adventurers a respite from the rigors of desert travel, and it allows them to glimpse the object of their search across a barren landscape lying to the south.

During the daytime hours, the Raurin desert appears virtually lifeless, occupied only by predators driven out of their lairs and into the searing heat by hunger. However, nightfall turns the area into a land of savagery and additional peril. Once the sun sets, dangerous beasts stalk the surface and roam the skies in search of prey, and the unprotected quickly fall victim to the ravenous predators.

Few humans risk the dangers of this land, with one notable exception. The descendants of the forewarned faithful survivors of Set's retribution still roam the lands adjoining the desert, hoping to one day return to the kingdom. These nomads are a proud, fierce people bound to their ancestral homeland by honor. They believe that one day, if their faith is strong enough, the gods will return their land to fertility. They frequently collect water at the oasis and offer prayers in hope that their perseverance will be rewarded.

Leaving their families in a settlement to the northwest, a small group of these nomads has paused at the oasis to rest their camels and camp for the evening. These nomads are settling in as the PCs arrive. In the south, foreigners are typically looked upon with great suspicion, especially when they are armed, but the PCs are fortunate to have encountered some of the more receptive inhabitants of the desert.

As the PCs reach the oasis, read or paraphrase the following to the players:



When you arrive at the oasis, you are met by a group of dark-skinned humans whose shared mirth is interrupted as they move to assist you. The clear, cool water of a large bubbling pool is an ideal antidote for your dust-caked tongues. The liquid has an odd but pleasing taste, and you find your vitality returning as you drink your fill.

After you are refreshed, a tall, broad man approaches you, a warm smile and open hands contradicting the scimitar thrust through his sash. His speech is a rough, guttural form of Common, blurred by an unfamiliar accent.

"You are obviously strangers here, for no one wanders the plains of Raurin on foot and hopes to live to see the dawn of a new day. You must be robust souls, indeed. But by the god-kings, you look like you have the plague about you! A good meal should take care of that well enough. If you plan treachery—which would be a most unwise decision, I assure you—be on your way. Otherwise, you are welcome at our fire-pit. I am Sarim, son of Palim and father of many."

After introductions, the nomad offers you a meal, and you are startled by the remarkable hospitality the strangers offer you. Your hosts have as many questions for you as you do for them, but no amount of detail provides any clues to your location, for the nomads are as unfamiliar with the names of your homelands as you are with theirs.

In response to your questions about Raurin, Sarim launches into a tale that has the tone of one told many times:

"This land before you was not always barren and hostile. Raurin was once a place of wealth and fertility, before the mad king Khamsa betrayed the gods. It is said that he sought to conquer them and make them his servants, such was the depth of his foolishness.

"Dark Set, enraged by the king's presumption, smote the earth with his mighty hand, cursing the kingdom and its people. Some have claimed that his enormous handprint

scars the ground even today, but no one sane dares tread upon that ground, for it is unnatural and evil. For thousands of years, this desert has ruled this land in grim silence.

"No man can long survive the perils of the desert beyond this oasis, for the serpent god's curses battered the land, with horrible, disastrous consequences. What can be said of a desert split by a great barrier of ice that never melts, where evil, man-eating beasts roam the skies, and death, like a disease, hovers in dark clouds over the mad king's lost temple? Who knows what grim devils crawl in the dark, haunted shadows of that accursed place? No man who learns the secrets of Khamsa's folly can live to bear witness to what he discovers.

"Yet there are those fools who fear neither the darkness nor the ice, for they are driven mad by their lust for the riches said to be hidden in the labyrinthine tombs below the temple. Bah! What is wealth if it brings the curses of 3,000 years upon your head? My brother Akhul sought the temple's ancient mysteries, only to return a blind, babbling idiot, the flesh of his face a mass of blisters. Screaming nightmares plagued him for weeks, eventually driving him to take his own life as an end to his suffering. Our grief was great, but his fate stands as an example to those who would taunt the gods."

Sarim (nomad): AL NG; AC 4; MV 12; F7; hp 48; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 14, C 17, I 10, W 15, Ch 11; ML 15; *scimitar +2, bracers of defense AC 4.*

Sarim is a bit too friendly to strangers but has a great streak of curiosity about outsiders. He prides himself on being able to identify threats early enough to have plenty of time to prepare. He is quick with his blade and a fearsome foe in combat.

The nomad leader is joined by 20 ordinary nomads. The hard life of the desert requires great endurance and the ability to defend oneself against a variety of perils, so each of these apparently typical wanderers has the abilities of a 2nd-level fighter.

Nomads (20): AL varies, none evil; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; leather armor, scimitar, dagger.

Sarim knows no details about the temple, other than the fact that it lies to the southeast. He is not familiar with the flail but recognizes it as a symbol of authority and becomes noticeably anxious if it is shown to him. If the PCs reveal the message of their dreams, he begs for more information in the hope that the restoration of Raurin may somehow be tied to the flail. Eventually, however, Sarim's superstition about the temple wins out. If the PCs, drawn by their visions or intrigued by the nomad's talk of treasure, announce their intention to journey there, he will do his best to dissuade them.

Sarim will not sell any of his 30

Random Encounters

Encounters occur on a roll of 1 on 1d8, with checks made three times a day. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d20 and consult the following list. Several of the creatures listed below are limited to certain areas and are active only at specific times of day:

1 **Stone giant:** INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14 + 1-3 hp; hp 65; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon type (huge club for 2-12 + 8 hp damage); SA hurl rocks for 3d10 hp; SD camouflage; SZ H (18' tall); ML 16; XP 8,000; MC1. This giant is from the Giant's Belt, a mountain range to the west where large groups of stone giants are known to reside. He is returning home after a period of wandering and views the PCs as a source of amusement rather than as foes, using them for target practice with his stones. Other than a bag of stones and a few common (and disgusting) stone giant belongings, he carries nothing of interest. The creature's camouflage ability is nullified by the desert surroundings.

2-3 **Slavers** (10): AL LE; AC 8; MV 8; F2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 35; MC1 (Men). These natives of Unther are leading five escaped **slaves** (AC 10, hp 3) back to their homeland. The movement rate of their group is slowed by the fact that the slaves are bound and forced to walk. The slavers ride camels.

Camels (10): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 21; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spitting; SZ L; ML 3; XP 65; MC1 (Animal, herd).

The slavers are led by a **6th-level fighter/thief** (AC 4, hp 28, D 18, leather armor) and are weary from their long journey. They are not particularly eager to engage in combat with a strong, well-armed group of adventurers. However, if pressed, they gladly try to add a few slaves to their supply. The leader carries a *dagger +2* and a potion of *extra healing*. The remaining slavers wear leather armor and are armed with ordinary whips, spears, and short swords.

4-5 **Giant scorpion:** INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5 + 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4; SA poison sting; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650; MC1.

6-7 **Manticore:** INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6 + 3; hp 39; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA tail spikes; SZ H; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC1.

8-9 **Ant lion, giant:** INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 9, burrow 1; HD 8; hp 27; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SA pit; SZ L (10' long); ML 8; XP 1,400; MC2. This creature will be encountered only in sandy areas, where its funnel-shaped pit may be stumbled into by one of the PCs. The true nature of this pit is difficult to ascertain during the day; identification is nearly impossible if the party is traveling at night.

10-11 **Mongrelmen** (6): INT low to average; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6, 5 (×2), 3 (×3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35; MC2. These hideous crossbreeds are well suited for life in the desert, where they are isolated from the ridicule typically heaped upon them in civilized areas. Nonetheless, they are quite ashamed of their appearance and wrap their faces with large hoods that also provide protection from the swirling, sand-laced winds.

The mongrelmen carry clubs, but fight only in self-defense. However, if approached, they will not hesitate to use their special pickpocketing abilities (70% chance of success). They carry nothing of value but would like to remedy this situation at the PCs' expense.

12-13 **Thri-kreen** (5): INT high; AL CN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 6 + 3; hp 42, 33, 28, 21, 17; THAC0 13; #AT 5 or 3; Dmg 1-4 (×4)/2-5 or by weapon type; SA saliva paralyzes; SD dodge missiles on 9 or better; SZ M; ML 12; XP 1,400; MC3. These grotesque mantis warriors are engaged in a hunting expedition and will attack the party with great swiftness. Thri-kreen relish the taste of elves, which are a truly rare delicacy in these parts. Seeing elves among the party drives these beasts into a frenzy.

camels to the party under any circumstances, and he will bristle at the request if the PCs intend to search for the temple, angered over the prospect of taking the animals into such a deadly land. If unsuccessful in his attempts to make the PCs reconsider their plan, he departs, saying "Let Seker's light illuminate your path and clear your vision." A PC cleric has a 10% cumulative chance per level of recognizing the name Seker as a member of the Egyptian pantheon, one of the gods the nomads worship.

Across the Desert of Curses

As Sarim indicated, the anger of the gods is reflected in the unique, chaotic geographical features of this section of the great Raurin desert. It takes little examination to realize that crossing the wide expanse is a formidable challenge, full of a variety of hazards. A hot, steady wind blows across the dunes; the faint hiss of flying sand is the only sound. Through waves of heat rising off the landscape, a massive structure can be seen at a great distance from the oasis.

Standard rules for desert areas apply to daytime travel as outlined in the *Wilderness Survival Guide* (pages 26, 52-53, 58-60), unless otherwise specified.

Numerous creatures, more resilient than men, roam the desert. Consult the "Random Encounters" sidebar as the PCs cross the desert toward Khamsa's temple.

B. Sea of Ice. As the PCs likely suspect, this area is not ice at all, but the true nature of the surface is no less bewildering. Set's curse blasted the earth with such a searing heat that this stretch of sand, which was blown in with the skriaxit, became a rolling sea of glass, like some huge glacier cutting through the desert. The surface reflects sunlight in a blinding glare that prevents the party from comfortably approaching within 200 yards during the day; any PC in that range who gazes at the glass for a full round is blinded for 2-8 turns.

Even if the PCs devise a way to deal with the light, they could never hope to survive on the glass while the sun beats down from the sky. Adventurers attempting to cross the glass during the day will be fried like eggs in a skillet in a matter of minutes, taking 1-6 hp of damage for each round of exposure. Any PC who remain in the reflected sunlight for five continuous rounds falls unconscious. If a PC in metal armor loses consciousness, treat the effects as if a *heat metal* spell has been cast on him, in addition to the round-by-round damage mentioned previously.

While the impact of the heat can be avoided by PCs with the ability to fly over the surface, the blinding effects of the reflected light still apply. Being struck blind, even momentarily, is a truly grim prospect for an airborne PC. Ingenuity and cooperative use of spell creativity may provide the means for crossing. Award the PCs bonus experience points if they are able to accomplish this difficult feat.

14-15 **Hieracosphinx:** INT low; AL CE; AC 1; MV 9, fly 36; HD 9; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/1-10; SZ L; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC2 (Sphinx). This evil, winged creature lairs atop the cliffs to southeast. Swooping down on the party, the beast attempts to torment the PCs before killing them, for these creatures delight in wreaking havoc.

16-17 **Minions of Set** (6): INT high; AL LE; AC −2; MV 12 or by animal form; HD 6; hp 25; THAC0 11 (or 15); #AT 1 or by animal form; Dmg 1-12 or by animal form; SA *polymorph self*; SD save as 10th-level fighters; SZ M; MR 10%; ML 16; XP 1,400; FR10. These beings are powerful magical servants of Set who roam the desert of Raurin to perform tasks of his choosing. They are currently searching for victims for the medusa (see area 15), whom they feed a regular diet of humanoids. They are tireless in this task, fanatically devoted to Set, and thoroughly evil.

Minions have several special abilities. In human form, they appear as fierce warriors, well over 6′ tall, wearing bronze plate mail bearing the symbol of Set, a coiled serpent. Their armor and the razor-sharp swords they carry both disappear immediately if these beings are slain. Each minion is able to polymorph into any three of the creatures listed below, retaining its typical armor class, hit dice, and hit points but assuming the movement rate, attacks, and special attacks of the new form.

Form	Move	#AT	Dmg	SA
Bear	12	3	1-6/1-6/1-8	hug
Jackal	15	1	1-2	nil
Crocodile	6, Sw 12	2	2-8/1-12	nil
Scorpion	12	3	1-8/1-8/1-4	poison
Snake	15	1	1-3	venom

If the minions defeat the PCs, the party's survivors will be bound and taken to the temple through the cell entrance (area 15), where they will await sacrifice to the medusa.

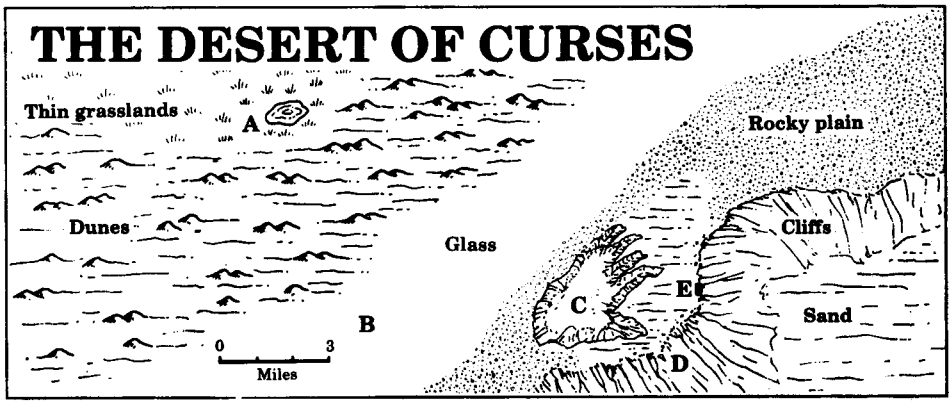
18-19 **Desert wraiths** (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9 (18 in jackal form); HD 6+3; hp 27; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (human form), 1-6 (jackal form); SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 2,000; FR10. If the PCs have ever faced jackals in combat, they will be in for quite a surprise when attacked by these creatures, for they do not share the timid nature of true jackals. It is quite unlikely that PC clerics will realize initially that these creatures are undead, and therefore attempts at turning could be difficult. This encounter will take place only at night.

The wraiths charge as jackals and switch to human form as they attack. Their touch inflicts 1-4 hp damage and drains one life level (no saving throw). These undead are turned as spectres. Holy water inflicts 2d4 hp damage per vial, and daylight destroys them.

Heroes reduced to zero life levels by a desert wraith are reanimated as zombies within 48 hours, unless their bodies are washed with holy water.

20 **Brown dragon** (very young): INT high; AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, burrow 24; HD 10; hp 39; THAC0 7; #AT 3 plus special; Dmg 1-4/1-4/3-30; SA ambush, acid breath weapon; SZ G (47′ long); ML 17; XP 3,000; FR10. This wicked creature will be encountered only in sandy areas, where it will burrow to the surface and surprise the PCs, attempting to drag as many as possible down into its lair deep below the sands (−5 to PCs' surprise rolls). The dragon can breathe a 5′-wide spray of acid in a 60′ line, causing 4d6+4 hp damage to all victims caught within. Brown dragons have no wings and cannot fly.

This young dragon has collected no treasure and chooses to wander in search of food instead of building a permanent lair. It has not learned to speak Common.



Otherwise, the PCs must adapt their travel schedule. The party can successfully begin a journey across the area two hours after nightfall, when the glass cools enough to allow passage. Traveling by night, of course, presents its own logistical problems. Double the chances of a random encounter, because desert predators hunt at night regardless of their typical activity cycles. Beasts of burden, spooked by the strange echoes of their hooves on the glazed surface, will not willingly cross the glass.

The sea of glass is not a level, featureless plain. Glazed dunes, "waves," pits, and jagged areas dot the region. The glass appears to be quite thick, though the surface cannot be penetrated by normal means if the PCs attempt to confirm this impression. Oddly, the region somehow remains free of sand, despite the grains carried by the constant wind.

Combat on the glass presents additional hazards. Footing is unsure, and PCs attempting any activity other than careful, slow walking (such as running, jumping, or fighting) have a 25% chance each round of slipping (−5% for each point of dexterity over 15). The glass withstands physical attacks such as a crushing blow from a mace, but spells such as *lightning bolt* can shatter the surface. PCs (or creatures) caught in a spray of shattered glass take a total of 2d12 hp damage from the shower of small projectiles (treat as a single attack with THAC0 19).

C. Talons of Set. Unless the PCs choose to walk the wide circumference of this dried, blackened lake bed, it must be crossed to get to the temple. Despite the name that folklore gives it, this unusual canyon resembles a clawed hand only by coincidence. Once considerably larger and roughly oval in shape, the shifting sands have given this barren area its unusual, threatening appearance. A rough, rocky plain surrounds the basin.

The lake bed gradually slopes down to 1,000′ deep at its lowest point, leveling off on a barren surface broken by large fissures. Movement over the rough terrain is difficult, but the journey can be completed without incident (other than the possibility of a random encounter, of course).

D. Cliffs. Like the lake bed, the stone of these cliffs was seared black at the time of the great cataclysm by the combined effects of the heat and fire elementals. Close inspection of eroded areas suggests that some event changed the cliffs' natural color. Remarkably enough, the temple itself is free from this change, its reddish-brown stone standing out sharply against the dark cliffs.

Paphoset has established a temporary dwelling in a hidden cave located along the face of the cliff, north of the temple.

E. Khamsa's Temple. Like some great beacon, this enigmatic structure lures the curious, who must risk the hazards of crossing the strange desert landscape to reach it. The structure is built directly into the cliff wall, overlooking what was once a valley teeming with life. Sand blown by furious gales against the natural windbreak of the cliff has created a gradually sloping approach that nearly covers the structure and spills through the large windows to form a deep inner cascade.

The resilience of Khamsa's temple is testament to the accomplishments of his subjects, for despite the skriaxit's efforts, it remains intact and virtually unblemished today. The extent of its staggering size is concealed by the tons of sand that buried the kingdom; nonetheless, what remains above the surface appears to be a full-sized temple. Though it seems somewhat unusual in design (as are most structures in this odd land), the true nature of the temple cannot be determined from the outside. The extent of the colossal architecture becomes apparent only after the party enters the building.

Dwarves immediately recognize that the facade is a single piece of sandstone carved from the cliffs. Amazingly, the inner temple appears to have been constructed in the same way, though the great size of the temple seems to make such a fact impossible. All in all, it is clearly an architectural marvel, one unmatched anywhere in the Realms.

Examination of the inner temple reveals that it is a highly impractical structure, for it apparently was designed with no consideration for human needs. This impression is quite accurate, for Khamsa himself directly oversaw its design and, thinking himself a god, the king did not plan for food preparation, waste disposal, or other day-to-day necessities. In fact, the structure appears to be more a tomb than a temple, a vast monument to Khamsa.

The temple reflects tremendous wealth, but it is mostly nonportable decorative architecture, such as marble flooring. This, however, should be quite tantalizing to an adventurer, for any culture able to construct such a magnificent monument must have vast stores of wealth at its disposal. Everything portable of value in the temple has been collected by the medusa and stored in the treasure vault (area 14), making it appear that tomb robbers have plundered the structure over the centuries.

The DM may wish to alter the contents of the temple to include a permanent *gate* or similar means for the PCs' to return home if the players do not want to continue the campaign in the southern lands. If this option is chosen, it is recommended that such a device be placed in the shrine (area 12), where Khamsa would have used it to enthrall his subjects with a godlike display of power.

The upper area of the foyer (area 2) is illuminated if the PCs enter during the day, but otherwise the temple is bathed in complete darkness. Only the medu-

sa's lair has any light source at all. The rooms throughout the temple are dotted with hieroglyphics, a script that is altogether unfamiliar to the PCs. *Read languages* ability is needed to comprehend these strange symbols, which cover a variety of subjects but universally hail Khamsa as ruler of gods and man. In numerous places, Khamsa is depicted wielding the *flail of the desert kings* and wearing the *circlet of the adder*, and appears to be using the flail to influence the masses.

If the party approaches the building at night, the PCs will be attacked by a trio of **desert wraiths** (hp 40, 32, 26; see "Random Encounters" for complete statistics). These undead were victims of the skriaxit attack and have roamed the plain near the temple ever since. They have burrowed into the sands and burst forth when the party passes nearby to attack with surprise (−1 to party's surprise rolls). The wraiths will not pursue the party into the temple.

Level One

The inexorable passage of time has not obscured the lavishness of Khamsa's sanctuary. Though characterized by signs of abandonment, the inner structure has been as resilient as the exterior during its 4,000-year existence.

1. Entryway. A pair of matched, semicircular projections, each 50′ high and pierced by long, thin windows, provides entry to the structure. Sand enters the chamber through the base of these windows, spilling into the foyer like a vast waterfall. The enormous pile is nearly 80′ above the base of the temple at its lowest point, the accumulated sediment of centuries of windstorms.

2. Foyer. The vast width of this chamber is difficult to determine, even in daylight, and the shadowy reaches of the far walls are not revealed by torches. The air is thick with dust, making breathing difficult. If the PCs have light other than torches, a massive stone head can be seen below against the opposite wall of the chamber, partially covered by sand. Most features of the grim countenance are worn away, but the figure still reflects great power, and the enormous statue is an awe-inspiring creation, indicative of the advancement of the culture that created it.

The "floorless" chamber extends over 60′ to the eastern wall. Any PC unwise enough to jump blindly into the temple or try to walk along the surface of the sand will be swallowed up by the loose upper layers, sliding below the surface and suffocating in four rounds.

Near the southern end of the opposite wall, a large, rubble-strewn fissure allows access to the inner temple, provided that the PCs can cross the open foyer.

3. Gallery. This long hall is lined with tall columns covered with dozens of slithering, jet-black snakes. These creatures appear to regard the PCs with interest, but they are harmless and will not attack the party. If approached, they glide away along the marble floor, fleeing before the group. The enormous chamber ends in a set of heavy bronze doors, which are locked but not trapped.

4. Receiving Room. This chamber, once used by Khamsa to greet important worshipers and other dignitaries, is dominated by an obsidian platform atop which rests a heavy wooden chair, ornate in design and decoration. A broken door in the northeast corner leads out of the chamber.

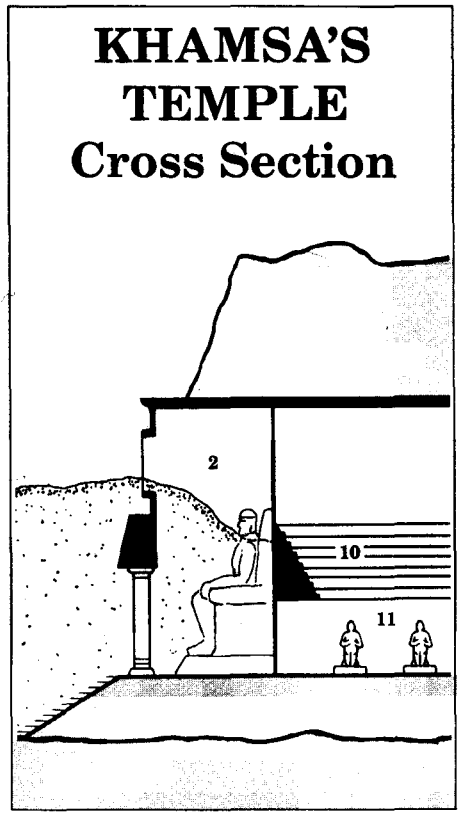
A secret door in the northern wall opens to reveal a narrow passageway that extends into the chamber where Khamsa once kept his concubines (area 6).

This room, if examined closely, reveals signs of having been plundered by tomb robbers. The most successful invaders of Khamsa's temple actually reached this chamber before being slain.

5. Corridor. This 10′-wide hallway is filled with dust, cobwebs, and crumbled rock, appearing to have been unused for many years. The walls feature faded, cracked paintings of Khamsa's great achievements, portrayed in both literal and symbolic fashion. While the specifics of most of these scenes are not discernible, a common theme seems to be powerful beings of varied types paying homage to a human king.

After 60′, the hallway bends to the west, where a secret door allows access to the chamber where Khamsa's concubines once resided. This door can be opened by pressing a slightly raised projection in the headpiece of a female figure depicted on the southern wall.

6. Harem. The only subjects permitted to live within the temple were



Khamsa's concubines, who were housed in this hidden room and guarded by eunuchs. In the center of the chamber is a sunken, circular pit, the lower portion of which was once used as a large bathing area.

The circular conversation pit and the floor of the chamber are nearly unseen, for the room is teeming with Set's "mistresses"—hundreds of snakes that have survived over the ages through cannibalism. The scent of human prey drives these beasts into a frenzied attack.

The 342 snakes here can be broken down into the following types:

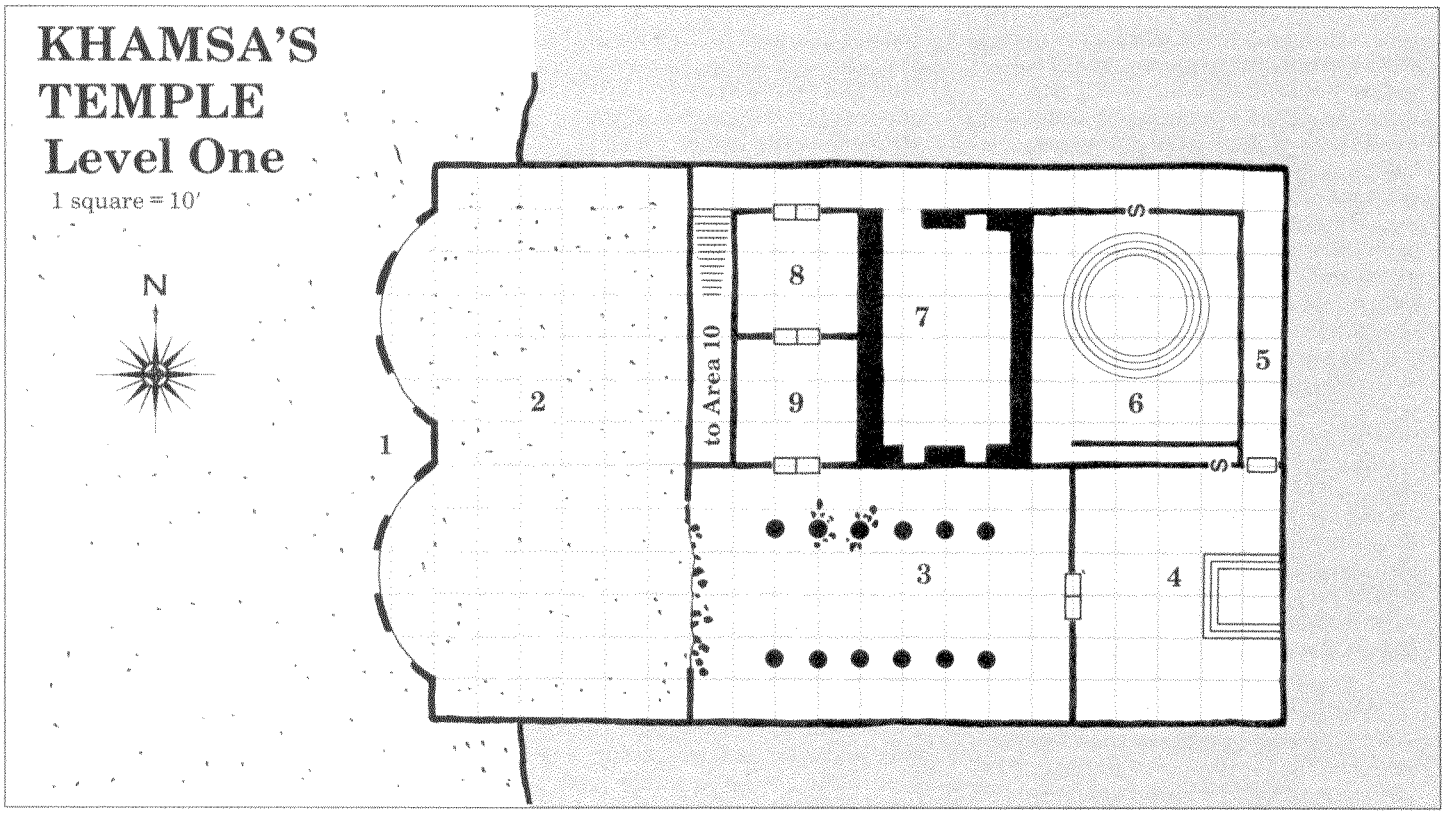
Snakes, harmless (215)

Constrictors, normal (45): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+2; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1/1-3; SA constriction; SZ M; ML 8; XP 175; MC1.

Constrictors, giant (10): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6+1; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/2-8; SA constriction; SZ L; ML 9; XP 650; MC1.

Snakes, poisonous, normal (52): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC1.

Snakes, poisonous, giant (12): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+2;



hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison; SZ M; ML 9; XP 420; MC1.

Snakes, spitting (8): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4 +2; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3; SA spits poison; SZ M; ML 9; XP 650; MC1.

When the PCs open a door to this chamber, regardless of which side of the room they attempt to enter, one of each type of snake emerges and attempts to attack. Each round thereafter that the door stays open, 10 serpents flood out of the room (roll for type). The girth of the larger snakes could actually prevent the door from being closed. The giant snakes will pursue the PCs down the hall.

7. Chapel. This was the most heavily used chamber in the temple complex before the cataclysm, and was the first to be completed. Continuous prayers to Khamsa were once uttered here by his priests. A marble altar lined the southern wall then, but it was destroyed by the maedar that lives in area 13.

The chapel is now occupied by several sons of Kyuss, loathsome creatures that were once clerics in Khamsa's service. Rising in the ranks through deception and fawning rather than true religious devotion, they appealed to Set to save their miserable lives when the cataclysm occurred, and were "rewarded" with their present undead status. Each occupies one of the alcoves in the chamber, which is pitch black and full of dust.

The son of Kyuss in the northern alcove remains motionless until the PCs enter the room, and then attacks from behind. This attack triggers the two in the southern alcoves to charge the group for melee.

Sons of Kyuss (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 10; MV 9; HD 4; hp 26, 22, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA fear, disease, worms; SD regeneration; SZ M; ML special; XP 1,400; MC5 (Kyuss, Son of).

Sons of Kyuss are truly dreadful creatures, capable of slaying even the most experienced adventurers. Each son radiates a spherical, 30'-diameter zone of *fear* that causes all those who fail saving throws vs. spells to flee for a full turn, 60% likely to drop the items they are carrying. The sons' double-handed attacks are 25% likely to cause a rotting disease that is fatal within 1-6 months unless the victim receives a *cure disease* spell. This disease negates all *cure wounds* spells, and the victim loses two points of charisma permanently for each month of the disease's progression.

Even more horrid than the sons' disease attacks are the worms that infest the head of each corpse. One worm per round can attempt to jump onto a PC whom the son is fighting. In the following round, the worm digs beneath the skin of the victim, burrowing toward the victim's brain in 1-4 rounds. If the worm reaches the brain, the victim dies and becomes a son of Kyuss. While above the skin, these worms can be destroyed by cold iron, holy water, or a blessed object. A *remove curse* or *cure disease* spell kills burrowing worms, and a *neutralize poison* or *dispel evil* spell slows them for 1-6 turns. Worms that fail to hit a victim die immediately upon dropping to the ground.

A *cure disease* or *remove curse* spell cast on a son transforms it into a zombie, but an adventurer touching one to cast these spells is subject to the attacks of 1-4 worms. The sons can be turned by priests and are treated as mummies on the undead table.

Sons of Kyuss regenerate 2 hp per round; those reduced to 0 or fewer hp collapse as if slain but continue to regenerate and stand to resume fighting once they reach 1 hp. Fire, lightning, acid and holy water cause permanent damage, and the touch of holy water or a holy symbol to their wounds prevents regeneration. If these procedures are undertaken while the son is below 0 hp, the creature is destroyed.

Hidden amid the tattered garments of the son in the northern alcove is the *periapt of proof against poison (+1)* he once employed.

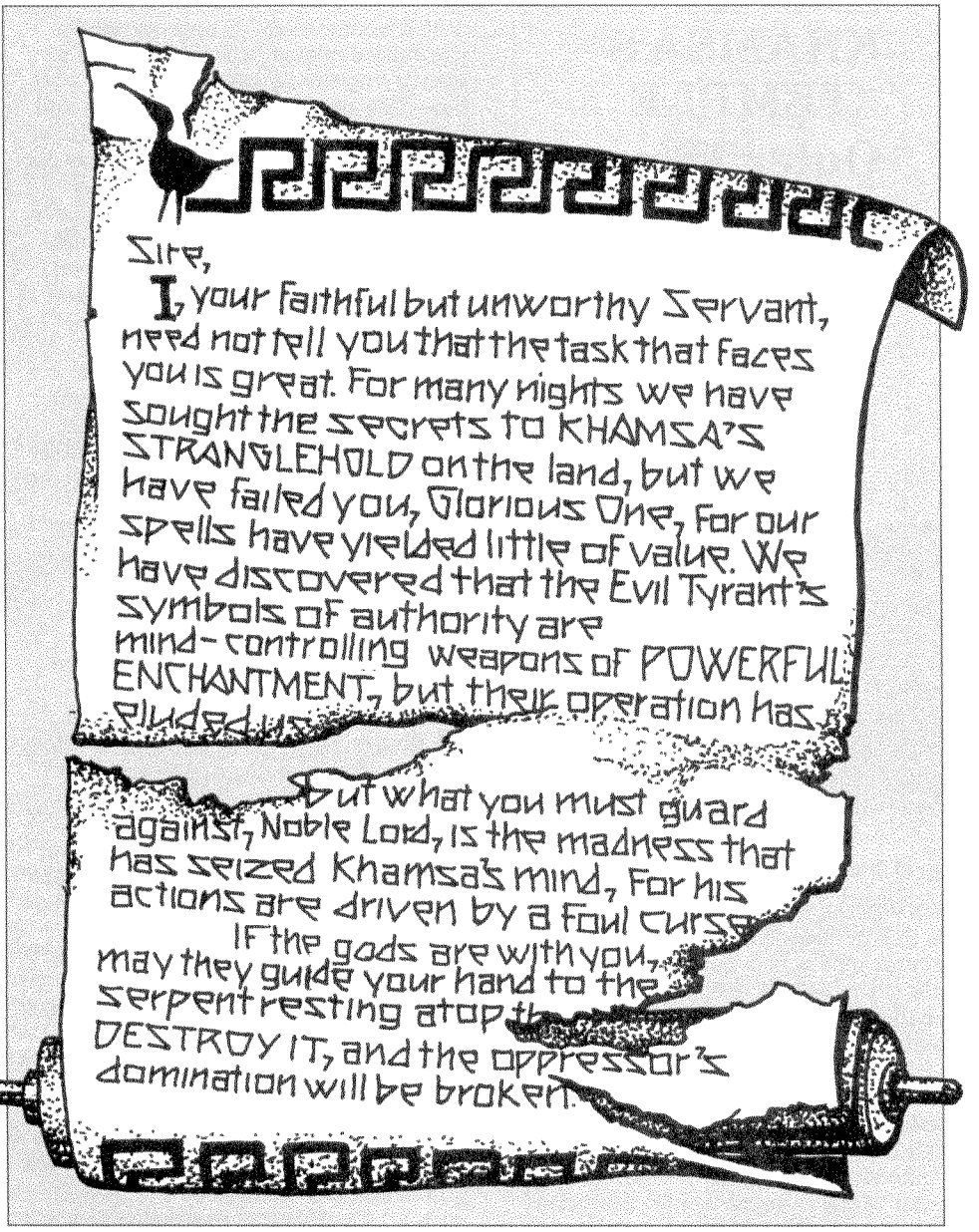
8. Archives. This chamber was designed to house books, scrolls, and artwork glorifying Khamsa, and to preserve detailed records of his words and deeds as a god. Obviously, this room was not used for long, for Khamsa never reached his goal of divine ascension. All books glorifying the king at the expense of Set and other gods were destroyed long ago. The room is now barren.

The doorway in the southern wall is locked.

9. Trophy Room. The contents of this room are a testament to the peak of Khamsa's power, before his descent into madness. Lining the walls are spears, shields, and other spoils of battle, all of unusual, antiquated design. The heraldry and weapon-craft of dozens of long-dead cultures are preserved here; many of the trophies would be of great interest to a collector or museum curator in the north. The entire collection can fetch up to 3,000 gp, but transporting the bulky objects across the desert is difficult at best. If used in combat, the weapons and shields shatter to fragments upon contact.

Of greater immediate value to the PCs is a small ornamental scroll tube of an oddly purplish glass, hidden within a kilt of studded leather. This item will be discovered only if the adventurers sift through the room's contents. The ancient scroll within the tube is tattered and cracking, and it crumbles if not removed gently. Written in faded script is a hurried warning regarding the *flail of the desert kings* and the *circlet of the adder*.

The nonmagical scroll, missed by Khamsa's soldiers as they sorted through the booty belonging to a conquered foe, is an ancient letter written by a mage to his king on the eve of a war with Khamsa. If a *comprehend languages* spell is cast to decipher the archaic language, the PCs can extract the information given in the players' handout above.


Sire,
I, your faithful but unworthy Servant, need not tell you that the task that faces you is great. For many nights we have sought the secrets to KHAMSA'S STRANGLEHOLD on the land, but we have failed you, Glorious One, for our spells have yielded little of value. We have discovered that the Evil Tyrant's symbols of authority are mind-controlling weapons of POWERFUL ENCHANTMENT, but their operation has eluded us.
But what you must guard against, Noble Lord, is the madness that has seized Khamsa's mind. For his actions are driven by a foul curse.
If the gods are with you, may they guide your hand to the serpent resting atop the
DESTROY IT, and the oppressor's domination will be broken.

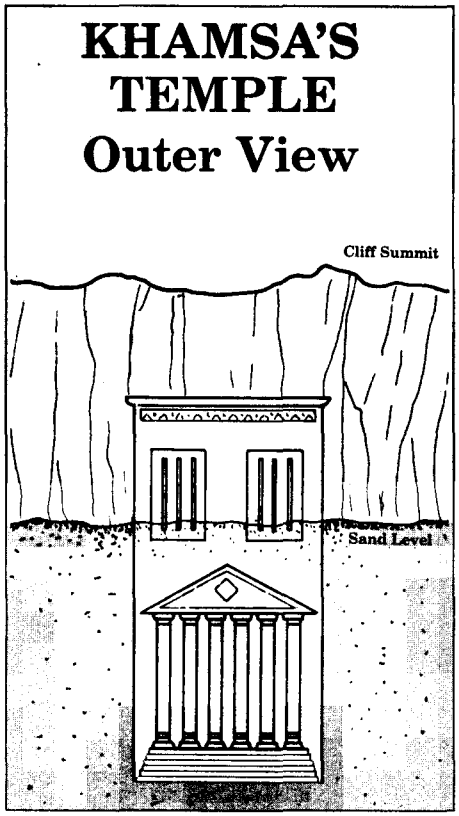
After reading the scroll, the PCs may begin to question the validity of their dreams, and may approach the task ahead of them with greater skepticism. The letter's reference to the "serpent" will add to the significance of the hieroglyphics portraying Khamsa wearing the *circlet of the adder*.

A bundle of banners and cloaks in the corner has grown its own fungus trap.

Yellow mold: INT non; AL nil; AC 9; MV 0; HD 0; hp 0; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison spores; SD affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ S; MC2.

Any PC examining the pile is caught in the mold's cloud of spores and must save vs. poison or die. Both *cure disease* and *resurrection* spells must be cast on the victim within 24 hours to restore life.

Unlocked banded wood doors open outward to the gallery (area 3).



Level Two

This was the primary level of the temple in Khamsa's day, though the original entrance is now buried by sand. The bulk of the level is one enormous chamber that climbs to well over 100' in height.

10. Balconies. Winding around the atrium are three levels of walkways, each 15' wide. The inner edges feature ornate stone railings overlooking the center of the chamber below. A section of the second tier is broken away along the eastern wall, allowing the PCs to lower themselves with ropes to the lowest tier. Each tier has a set of 15'-wide stairs in the northwest corner leading down to the next level. The final tier ends at a set of stairs, along the eastern wall of the atrium, that descends to area 11.

11. Atrium. The most prominent feature of this cavernous chamber is a set of eight huge columns, the bases of which are statues of kneeling gods, a wonder of design and craftsmanship. Climbing to 20' in height, each base features a figure with a beastly head atop a human body, as appropriate for the deity depicted, with hieroglyphics identifying the figure. A cleric has a base 25% chance, plus 5% per level and 5% for every point of wisdom over 15, of recognizing the pantheon. The pillar in the northeast corner, which once portrayed Set, is cracked and broken above the shoulders, leaving it indistinguishable. The god, infuriated at being portrayed as a kneeling vassal, destroyed the statue's head in a fit of rage. The rest of the column is intact.

Coiled about the statue of Set and hidden in the darkness is a monstrous cobra that attacks any PC within 10'. This ancient beast's poison is absolutely deadly; any PC bitten who fails a saving throw vs. poison dies immediately.

Poisonous snake, enormous: INT semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 10; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA poison; SZ G; ML 13; XP 2,000; new monster.

Two sets of bronze doors are set into the western wall, made to open outward. Close inspection indicates that the hinges, set into the stone with thick, reinforced steel bolts, are strained by some great weight and show signs of deterioration. This is caused by the pressure from the sand filling the foyer (area 2), as evidenced by the grains that have trickled through the cracks at the base of the doors.

Attempting to open the doors is a very foolish enterprise. The PCs have absolutely no chance, regardless of ingenuity, of opening them by physical attempts. If spells or other magical means are employed, the portals burst under the strain from each side, and the chamber is flooded with sand. Any PC within 10' of a door is instantly engulfed and buried alive by the torrent, with a 15% chance of first being crushed by the door. The flow of sand reveals several well-preserved corpses that have become dried husks over the centuries.

12. Shrine. In the center of this semicircular, domed chamber stands an empty 8'-high pedestal. Atop the pedestal is a circular depression designed to hold the base of a statue. Khamsa intended his likeness to be placed here, where statues of the divinities, like vassals, would bow their heads in homage. Carved on the front of the pedestal is the following message:

"Behold me in my splendor, king of kings, feared by the gods and worshiped by man. I am Khamsa, master of all I survey."

Inside the depression is a small, harmless-looking coiled grass snake, 1' long and motionless.

Flame snake: INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 3; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA breath weapon; MR 85%; SZ S; ML 12; XP 175; LL/46.

Any PC attempting to examine the top of the pedestal is immediately attacked by the flame snake's breath weapon and suffers 15 hp flame damage (save for half damage). The serpent can breathe flame up to five times a day and will not leave the pedestal unless attacked.

A long, matched set of circular stairs descends 40' into the earth, to a chamber once used as Khamsa's sanctuary (area 13).

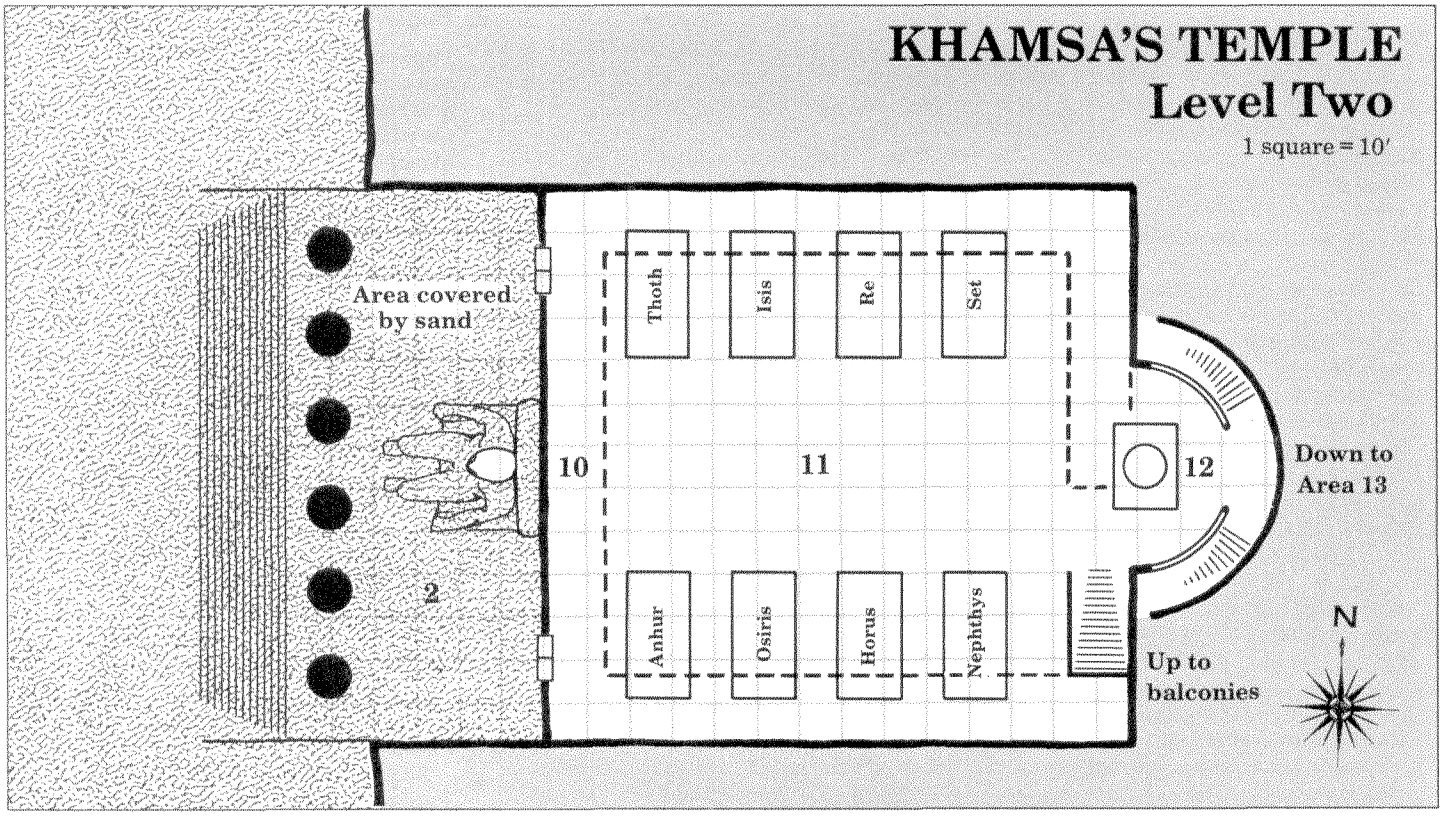
Level Three

The curving stairs meet at a small landing providing access to a 20' wide stairway covered by a tattered, stained carpet. A strange, misty orange light emerges from the chamber below.

13. Khamsa's Sanctuary. This lavish, columned room was built to accommodate great lethargy, for the most distinctive features are a plush divan and many soft, silken cushions, all set on a large raised platform at the far end of the chamber. This luxury is in stark contrast to the room's repulsive inhabitant. The greater medusa Echidna sleeps here, her serpentine torso hidden by a set of thick curtains that runs the length of the platform.

The medusa relies primarily on her gaze attack, although she resorts to her bow when faced with an extended fight, firing arrows poisoned with her own blood. This latter attack form is not often necessary, for in addition to her powerful petrification attack, Echidna has the assistance of her ghastly "family." Echidna's strategic direction of her maedar son and glyptar mate puts attacking foes at a tactical disadvantage.

When the PCs arrive, the medusa is fully awake and prepared to attack. Though grotesque, she is quite intelligent and leads her companions in an ambush. The medusa's victims are typically prisoners of Set's minions, horrified weaklings who die quickly without much of a fight, so the prospect of battling and defeating an armed adventuring party delights her. For the moment,



she is content to allow the party to stumble into her trap.

Concealed on the shadowy ceiling is a *net of entrapment* animated by the glyptar, who is tied to the strands as one of its weighted ends. The net glides along the ceiling in silence and drops on the party when it has its best advantage, triggering the remaining occupants' attacks. The trap drops in a 10' square, and all within the area must save vs. spells or become snared. Up to four PCs can be bound without hope of escape until the command word "jipad" ("release") is uttered. (A PC with a strength of 20 can open the net.)

The rope of the net is AC −10 with respect to attacks, but damage done to the net does not harm the glyptar. Sawing can't sever the ropes; they must be hacked apart, endangering PCs caught within. The glyptar itself is a dirty amethyst crystal approximately the size of a human fist and nearly indistinguishable from the other rock weights. Only the kind of close inspection impossible during combat will reveal that one weight is different from the others. One of the trapped PCs may notice this difference, however, if he makes an intelligence check on 1d20 at a −10 penalty.

Once the net has dropped, the greater medusa—a flimsy, diaphanous gown covering her repugnant torso—bursts through the curtain and attacks with her gaze, followed by a flurry of her poisoned arrows. Echidna acts with great malice. Believing herself immortal, she fights to the death, eager to destroy every PC and enjoy a greater feast than she has seen in 1,000 years.

Simultaneously, her maedar son emerges from his hiding place in the pillar marked with an X, attacking from behind and gaining automatic surprise on his unfortunate victim. The maedar attacks with his two powerful fists, attempting to disrupt spell-casting or subdue a powerful adventurer who is threatening the medusa.

In the unlikely event that the PCs possess the means to *dispel magic* as 15th-level casters and use it against Echidna, the greater medusa reverts to statuette form. If her name is spoken aloud she will reemerge magically, and any PC expecting her to perform at his command will be in for quite a shock, for she has a will of her own and instantly attacks her summoner.

Even if the party manages to slay Echidna, she is still deadly, for any PC touching her body must save vs. poison or die. If the medusa is slain before her son, the maedar attempts to use his *pass through stone* ability to flee through one of the chamber walls. He remains there until the adventurers depart, then stalks them relentlessly as long as he lives, hoping to systematically gain revenge.

The *net of entrapment* can be employed by the PCs if it is not destroyed in the struggle with the glyptar, but the PCs must discover the command word.

If Echidna and her family defeat the party, any petrified PC will be instantly shattered to rubble by the maedar, who will then use his *stone to flesh* ability on the remains to provide the creatures with a gruesome feast. PCs who flee and attempt to return later to rescue their petrified comrades, expecting to find statues, will be far too late.

A secret door, opened by a pressure plate in the floor near the base of the divan, swings inward to reveal the temple treasury (see area 14).

Echidna the Greater Medusa

This greater medusa is a special creation of the evil deity Set. The god bound her life essence to a statuette he employed to gain revenge on Khamsa, a boastful, blasphemous human king who dared to challenge the god's authority. Once Echidna petrified the impudent mortal, Set allowed her to claim the king's temple as her own and directed his minions to bring her tribute and a regular diet of victims. Although her statuette form resembles a *figurine of wondrous power*, she cannot be controlled by anyone other than Set himself.

Echidna (greater medusa): INT very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 8; hp 51; THAC0 13; #AT 1 plus weapon; Dmg 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SD poisonous blood; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 4,000; MC1.

Because of her supernatural origin, the greater medusa has survived for thousands of years beyond the typical lifespan of her kind. These years have been spent in a state of almost constant slumber, with the beast waking only to feed. Her presence in the temple amplifies her powers, and despite the fact that she has slept away most of a 4,000-year lifespan, her senses remain exceptionally keen. Like a spider in her web, she is alerted to the presence of a living humanoid within the temple and wakes in an instant. With a heart as cold as a gravestone, she exists only to destroy life and glorify Set.

Through mysterious ceremonies unknown to man, the medusa summoned Stheno, a maedar mate, who doggedly braved the perils of a desert crossing to respond to her call. Maedar (male counterparts of the medusa) lack the petrifying gaze of the female of the species but help provide their mates food from petrified victims through their *stone to flesh* ability. After smashing the medusa's victims to pieces, the maedar uses his *stone to flesh* power on the remains to create a grotesque feast. This power is usable once every three rounds.

Maedar, who are immune to the medusas' gaze and the poisonous bite of their serpentine hair, are muscular, hairless humanoids, typically dressed in a kilt or tunic. In addition to their *stone to flesh* power, maedar can pass through stone at their normal movement rate. This ability requires one round of concentration to perform, but it gives the maedar a deadly advantage when defending a medusa's lair against invaders.

Stheno and Echidna remained together for centuries, bearing a maedar child, but it became clear that the medusa would outlive her mate. Seeking to preserve his life force, Stheno exercised the maedar's natural ability to transfer his essence to the rock below the temple. The evil consciousness drifted through the stone until he struck an amethyst crystal and was trapped within. Recovered from the ground by his mate, Stheno now lives on as a glyptar bound to a *net of entrapment* that he animates as a moving, sentient trap to assist the medusa.

Stheno (glyptar/net): INT very; AL LE; AC 5/−10; MV fly 9 (A); HD 4 hp; THAC0 special; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA trapping; SD pass through stone, immune to petrification, paralyzation, and mind-affecting spells; SZ T/S; ML 14; XP 65; MC3 (Maedar).

Despite its seemingly limited condition, a glyptar is a powerful creature capable of great cunning. A glyptar can animate any inorganic object up to 1,000 lbs. and can use its *pass through stone* ability to take the object through walls, floors, and other solid objects. Once every three rounds, the glyptar can use its *stone to flesh* ability.

Stheno can use his infravision to see 90′ in all directions, and he can see 90′ on the Astral and Ethereal planes.

Battus, the young maedar offspring of Echidna and Stheno, remains with his mother in the lair, but he has grown restless recently and is considering striking out on his own. He suffers through long periods of inactivity while his mother sleeps, and he longs for a powerful foe rather than his regular ration of sacrificed victims. He has ventured out of the temple from time to time from curiosity and hunger. Intrigued by the outside world, he hopes to depart and discover the wonders of the world beyond, and perhaps be called by another medusa as a mate.

Battus (maedar): INT very; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SA stone to flesh; SD pass through stone, immune to petrification and paralyzation; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975; MC3 (Maedar).

Paphoset's Assault

Paphoset has trailed the adventurers to the temple and waits outside area 13 to determine the outcome of the PCs' battle with the medusa. He then either attacks the weakened PCs or attempts to reach Khamsa's petrified body (in area 14) to steal the stone-encased circlet from the distracted medusa. He is content to remove the head of the statue intact, and is planning to remove the circlet later after gaining the flail from the PCs. The evil priest strikes when everything is in his favor. If the PCs somehow manage to escape the fight with the medusa relatively unscathed, he may wait until after the adventurers attempt to rest. Consider his high wisdom when determining the timing of his attack.

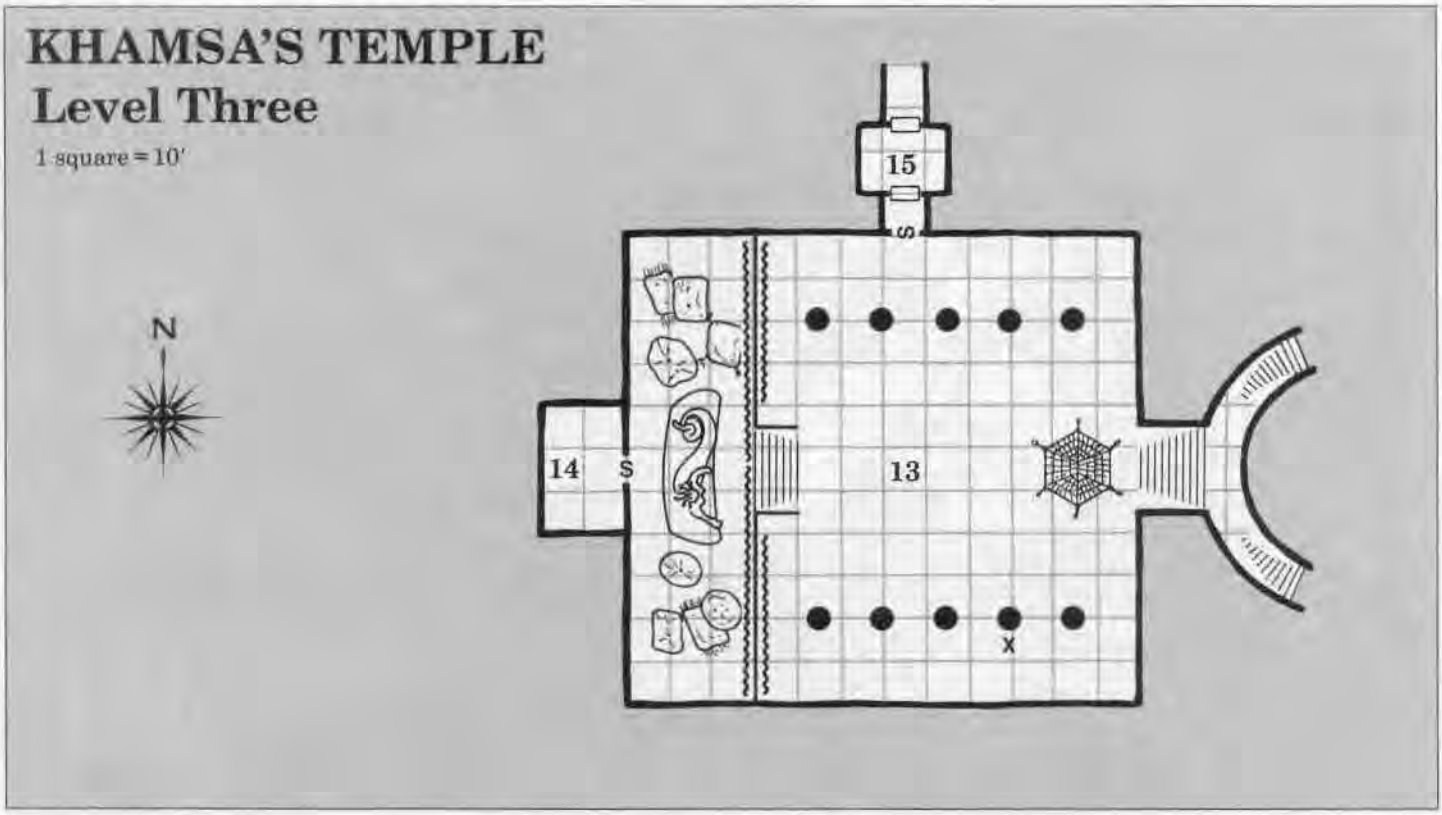
Paphoset: AL LE; AC 7; MV 10; C11; hp 50; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type plus poison; S 9, D 11, C 7, I 16, W 18, Ch 16; ML 14; XP 4,000; *staff of the serpent (adder), dagger +2, ring of protection +3, scarab of venom,* potion of *gaseous form,* scroll of *protection from petrification.*

As an accomplished priest of Set, Paphoset has attained the following abilities: backstab as an 11th-level thief at +4 on his attack roll and causing quadruple damage, immunity to all poisons, and the power to command undead with a successful turn roll.

The priest has access to the following spells: *beckon*, command, cure light wounds* (×2), *curse, protection from good, stumble*; obscurement, silence 15′ radius, snake charm, stormvoice*; animate dead, continual darkness, detect curse*, locate object, speak with dead; animal vision*, divination, flame strike, weapon immunity*; insect plague, slay living; word of recall.*

Remember that Paphoset's primary concerns are gaining the *circlet of the adder* and *flail of the desert kings*, and then escaping to safety. He has no hatred for the PCs; he views them only as obstacles to his goal. He does not consider it necessary (or prudent) to wage a protracted battle to destroy the entire party if he can accomplish his plans without it. On the other hand, he has no reservations about slaying the PCs if needed.

Though powerful, Paphoset has not risen to his level of ability through rashness; the priest prefers to use others to fight while he employs stealth,



trickery, and spells. If the PCs did not destroy the desert wraiths lurking near the entrance to the temple, Paphoset will control them and lead them in his attack. The same is true for the sons of Kyuss in the chapel (area 7), if the PCs avoided them. If these undead have been destroyed by the PCs, Paphoset will use spells and his influence as a priest of the serpent god to lead 1-6 of the remaining giant snakes from area 6 (roll randomly for type) in an assault on the PCs, hoping to surprise them as they examine the treasury.

Before entering the medusa's chamber, Paphoset protects himself with *weapon immunity** against the most common or most dangerous weapon type used by the PCs. Launching the undead or snakes into the assault, he moves to obtain the circlet and flail. If forced to engage in combat, Paphoset first activates his staff's serpent form, then attempts to backstab a PC. He has coated his *dagger +2* with an application from his *scarab of venom*, which causes 3d4 hp additional damage (no saving throw); the victim must save vs. poison or die in 1-4 rounds.

If Paphoset manages to steal the flail and circlet, he escapes by casting his *word of recall* spell, which is keyed to his temporary abode in the small cave north of the temple. Gathering his belongings, he flees northward on horseback.

Above all else, Paphoset is a survivor. If his plans go awry, he has no desire for this battle to be his last, so he uses his *word of recall* or potion of *gaseous form* to flee. Unwilling to sacrifice his life despite his obsession, he will escape to launch another scheme and perhaps once again plague the PCs.

Like all priests of Set, Paphoset long ago cast a *dying curse** spell on himself to avenge his future death. Any PC slaying the priest becomes the victim of the curse, with no saving throw allowed. Only a *wish* or *reverse bane** spell (the reverse of a *bane** spell) can remove a *dying curse**. Paphoset will tell the PCs about this curse in an effort to save himself if both the *word of recall* and his potion fail him.

14. Treasure Vault. This 20' × 30' room is protected by a *petrification* trap that the maedar, the custodian of the family's treasure, is immune to. Cast originally by Set, the trap is triggered by the first creature who enters the room without speaking the deity's name. Once the spell has been triggered, the remaining PCs can enter the room safely, although the spell is automatically renewed 12 hours after being set off.

Designed to be Khamsa's treasury, this secret room now serves as his sepulcher. His petrified corpse, preserved by the medusa as a private joke between herself and Set, rests against the northwest corner, surrounded by his riches. The statue's unusual, porous stone and its expression of horror indicate immediately that it is one of Echidna's victims. The folds of thick robes and faint detail of other rich garments hint to the PCs that this individual was some sort of ruler. Alert PCs may realize that this is the legendary Khamsa himself. The faint line of the *circlet of the adder*, and the upturned cobra head, are visible beneath the stone.

Any PC holding the flail will notice that it seems to hum with anticipation when brought within 10' of the petrified figure, a sensation that intensifies if the flail is moved closer to the circlet. This PC will be overwhelmed with the desire to obtain the circlet.

If a *stone to flesh* spell is used on Khamsa, his mummylike, withered corpse collapses at the feet of the PCs, its skeletal face frozen in anguish. Atop the broken, hairless skull rests the *circlet of the adder,* which can be lifted from the skull without difficulty. Resourceful PCs who cannot remove the petrification but wish to carry off the circlet will find that the item can be removed intact by breaking off the head of the statue and casting a *stone to flesh* spell on it later.

Any PC donning the *circlet of the adder* immediately comes under the influence of its *delusional insanity* curse. The wearer will attempt to use the powers of the flail to control his companions. Any PCs avoiding this command may attempt to remove the circlet, which will break the item's hold on the PC wearing it. The circlet's magic insures that the PC wearing the circlet will not submit to any attempt to remove it.

If it isn't obvious to the PCs by the time they discover the vault that the circlet and flail are evil items when employed together, the DM should attempt to make this point clear. Good PCs may wish to destroy the circlet to remove the curse; it breaks fairly easily. Allow the item a saving throw at +3 against whatever means are used to destroy it. If the head of the statue is shattered, the circlet will be destroyed.

Once the circlet is destroyed, the spell-like powers of the *flail of the desert kings* are neutralized, though it can still be used as a +2 weapon.

The rest of the chamber is filled with a dizzying array of riches. Heaped on the floor and dumped into open wooden chests of an ornate style are thousands of coins of unusual design. The bulk of this hoard are "pharaohs"—golden coins stamped with Khamsa's likeness—but a wide variety of other coins are scattered throughout. All of these coins are ancient and nonnegotiable in the present day (though gold is still gold).

In many of the southern lands, only nobles and the high-born use coins; foreigners hauling around great wealth, particularly 4,000-year-old native coins, are sure to draw a lot of unwanted attention from the authorities and other unscrupulous types. The 13,800 loose coins are worth 7,800 gp in the nations north of Raurin—if the PCs can find an appropriate rate of exchange. Disposing of the wealth could prove to be a long, tiresome process.

A heavy, wax-sealed amphora opens to reveal 500 gems of various sizes, twinkling like beastly eyes. The gems are worth a total of 12,000 gp. The treasury also contains the following items: a jeweled chalice (500 gp), a potion of *fire giant strength*, a *carpet of flying*, and a scroll containing three southern magic wizard spells, unreadable unless a *read southern magic** spell is cast on the scroll. The spells are *ladder**, *mummy**, and *time loop**, all of which are of great value to any mage in another part of the Realms. For a description of these spells, refer to the section on "Southern Magic" at the end of this adventure.

The PCs may wish to seek out a southern mage willing to teach a PC wizard to cast the *read southern magic** spell, but finding one is extremely difficult. Southern mages are universally reluctant to share their secrets with outsiders, for they fear their isolation could be compromised if northern sorcerers have access to their spells. Finding a tutor for this spell requires a lengthy, harrowing search and a great deal of discreet per-

suasion (including an enormous bribe).

15. Prison Cell. Set's minions carry victims to this dark, clammy chamber, leaving them for the greater medusa. The thick iron door in the southern wall insures that these servants can deposit the victims without being exposed to the medusa's gaze. A long tunnel under the desert sands leads to a cliffside cave.

If Echidna is slain, Set's minions eventually arrive and discover the death of their high priestess, and the deity will demand retribution. These creatures stalk the party whether they remain in the land or leave, pursuing the party ceaselessly. Their pursuit won't end until all of the PCs are slain or captured.

Concluding the Adventure

Sadly, the death of the medusa and the recovery or destruction of the circlet will not restore this section of the desert to its previous fertile condition. However, after Set discovers the death of his high priestess, the deity's attention will eventually be directed elsewhere, and one of the other gods from the pantheon may undo Set's curse on behalf of the nomads.

If Paphoset escapes with the flail and circlet, a party of good-aligned PCs may wish to pursue him and prevent him from using these items for evil. His trail leads the PCs north, back toward the Dalelands and away from the wrathful deity he betrayed. A standard journey back to the heartlands of the Realms from Raurin is both overly time consuming and impractical in campaign terms, so the DM may wish to allow the PCs to search for a magical method of returning to their homeland. The southern lands contain many unfamiliar and powerful sources of magic, one of which may hold the key for the PCs. Hints of the most unusual magic of all—technology—enhance these rumors.

The opportunities for expanded adventures in the Southern Realms are virtually limitless; many such adventure ideas are outlined in the FR10 *Old Empires* accessory. These lands are full of strange new monsters and treasures, offering many perilous challenges to adventurers. A brave and curious adventuring company may wish to remain and seek out treasures in the mysterious land. Southern spells and magical items can fetch a king's ransom from northern mages eager to ponder the mysteries of the Southern Realms, but only the hardiest of souls would choose to remain for any length of time. The native nomadic peoples have adapted to the forbidding climate, but outsiders find life tortuous.

If the PCs enter civilized areas, members of the murderous cult known as the Fangs of Set may turn aside briefly from their political intrigues to speed their deity's revenge against the party. On the other hand, if the adventurers venture farther into the desert of Raurin, they may stumble on the deadly Tower of Set, where a manifestation of the god is said to reside.

Ultimately, the longer the PCs remain in the South, the slimmer their chances of escape become.

Southern Magic

The primary difference between southern magic and spells of the north is the writing system used to record it—the Thoth mage-script. This script, named in honor of the scribe of the gods, is indecipherable to a standard *read magic* spell. A *read southern magic** spell is required to perform this task, and mages in the south guard this ability with great secrecy in an effort to solidify their power and preserve their autonomy. Only through the direct tutoring of a southern mage can a wizard from elsewhere in the Realms gain this capability, and many northern mages have found frustration or worse when searching for a willing teacher.

Mages and priests in the south are exceptionally powerful, for in addition to their access to all spells listed in the *Player's Handbook,* they have discovered and perfected many spells unknown elsewhere in the Realms. For more information on these spells and other examples of southern magic, refer to FR10 *Old Empires.*

Wizard Spells

Ladder (Alteration)
Level 1

Range: 20 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

The caster can use this spell to create a firmly anchored ladder of force, 1′ wide, and 10′ long plus 10′ per level of the caster, to a maximum length of 60′. This ladder is easy to climb (no dexterity check is required).

The ladder may be used to climb walls and pits, or it may be laid horizontally and used to cross chasms.

The material component is a knot of wood.

Mummy (Necromancy)
Level 5

Range: 50 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

With this spell, the mage can animate one corpse for every four levels of experience he possesses. These corpses have all of the characteristics and abilities, including hit points, of a mummy.

When the spell's duration has expired or the mummies are slain, the corpses crumble to dust.

The material component is mummy dust.

Time Loop (Alteration)
Level 7

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: 20′ cube
Saving Throw: Special

This spell creates an area where the flow of time repeats itself continuously, until the duration of the spell (as timed in the outside world) expires.

Creatures caught in a *time loop* see the world as flickering chaos and are unable to affect it in any way. Anyone outside the loop perceives those trapped within as endlessly repeating one set of actions; those outside may affect the beings within the *time loop* with ranged spells and attacks, but if they physically enter it, they too are trapped.

The material component for this spell is a powder of crushed diamond, ruby, emerald and sapphire dust, with each crushed gem being of at least 100 gp value.

Call (Conjuration/Summoning)
Level 9

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: None

This variant of the *gate* spell attracts the attention of a single native of the Prime Material plane. The caster calls the name of the being, who becomes aware that someone wants him to appear. The individual is free to accept or reject the call. If the offer is accepted, the being is instantly *teleported without error* to a spot of the caster's choosing, within 200' of the caster. If the offer is rejected, the *call* is silenced and no teleportation occurs. A *demand* spell may be used prior to this spell to persuade the target to accept.

The target need not be known to the caster, but his exact location must be; the spell does not provide the caster with that information. A *call* spell affects only creatures on the Prime Material planes.

The material component is a miniature wax statue of the target.

Priest Spells

Beckon (Conjuration/Charm)
Level 1

Sphere: Animal
Range: 1-mile radius
Components: V, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell affects one semi-intelligent (or less intelligent) creature. The creature must either be susceptible to an *animal friendship* spell or be a domesticated pet of the caster. Once the spell is cast, the creature hears the call and rushes to the side of the caster. If the creature is outside the one-mile radius of the caster, it will not come.

The material component of this spell is a piece of food favored by the target of the spell.

Stumble (Charm)
Level 1

Sphere: Combat
Range: 20 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell causes one creature within its area of effect to stumble. While under the effect of this spell, he suffers a −4 penalty to attack rolls, his movement rate is halved, and he loses all dexterity bonuses. The target is entitled to a saving throw vs. spells to resist the effects.

The material component is a drop of oil.

Detect Curse (Divination)
Level 3

Sphere: Divination
Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 1 object
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to magically examine an item or creature to determine if it has been subject to a *curse* spell. At 12th level, the caster is able to distinguish whether the spell was *bestow curse, major curse*, dying curse**, or *bane**. This spell does not detect magical items that are designed to have a malign effect, such as a *necklace of strangulation.*

Animal Vision (Alteration)
Level 4

Sphere: Animal
Range: 100 yards + 20 yards per/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: None

The spell links the vision of the priest to a single animal, be it mammal, reptile, or insect. Typically, the animal is sacred to the priest's religion (such as the snake or jackal for a priest of Set), but it need not be.

As long as the animal remains within the range of the spell, the caster can see through the eyes of the creature, using whatever vision it possesses. There is no other link between the caster and the animal; the priest must employ other spells for this purpose. The priest suffers no damage if the animal is killed.

The material component of this spell is a morsel of food desired by the animal.

Weapon Immunity (Abjuration)
Level 4

Sphere: Protection
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the priest to become immune to one specific weapon, such as a bastard sword, long sword, heavy crossbow bolt, etc.

When the priest is struck by that weapon, it does no damage to him. This protects the priest even from magical weapons. Monster attacks such as claws and fangs, or magical attacks such as a *fireball*, cannot be neutralized by this spell. Only one *weapon immunity* can be in effect at a time.

The material component for this spell is a piece of amethyst, jade, or lapis lazuli.

Dying Curse (Abjuration)
Level 6

Sphere: Protection
Range: Unlimited
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent until dispelled
Casting Time: 2 turns
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

When a priest casts a *dying curse* spell, he is avenging himself against future death. Anyone who kills the priest becomes the victim of a *major curse**, with no saving throw. A *major curse** has one of the following permanent effects (roll percentile dice):

01-50 Reduces one ability score to 3 (determined randomly by the DM)

51-75 −4 penalty to the victim's attack and saving throw rolls

76-00 Makes the victim 75% likely to drop whatever he is holding (or do nothing if he is not using tools or weapons); roll each round

Only a *wish* or *reverse bane** spell can remove the effects of this spell.

Continued on page 51

AERIE BORNE

BY CAL REA & GREG RICK

The heroes were good—but forced to do evil.

Artwork by L. A. Williams

Between receiving his M. Phil. in English and life in his new apartment, Greg is riding high. The start of another AD&D® campaign in his longtime world, Kaala, is the feather in his cap.

Cal has taken time off from his pursuit of the past (by way of graduate work in archaeology) to get firmly grounded in the present selling children's books. He is still searching for the right group of players to start off the new campaign world that was born in working out this adventure.

"Aerie Borne" is an AD&D adventure for 3-6 player characters of levels 4-6 (about 23 total levels). A predominantly neutral party will probably have to be given a monetary reason to help the giant eagles, while an evil party will not knowingly be accepted by the eagles' agent. It would be helpful for the party to include a ranger, a druid, or a character with tracking proficiency. This adventure works best with the terrain provided, a mountainous region next to a strip of forest, but this can be set in any campaign world.

In this adventure, the optional rules of specific encumbrance (*Player's Handbook,* page 78) and hovering on death's door (*Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 75) are used in detailing NPC actions and conditions. The DM should decide whether these rules are also enforced for the player characters.

Adventure Background

Hallam is a mage serving the warlord of Tyr Anrad, a lawful-evil expansionistic domain. In a move to increase his standing, Hallam presented the warlord with a plan to form the perfect team of assassins. After many months of research, Hallam had concluded that it would be possible to pervert the natural inclinations of a giant eagle if the egg were separated from the parents before hatching. Through a strict regimen of training (much like training a griffon), it should be possible to make the creature fiercely loyal to an assassin. The eagles' stealth, speed, and telepathy, when coupled with promising young assassins, would make highly effective and deadly teams.

Pleased with the thought of both corrupting giant eagles and perfecting his assassins, the warlord commanded Hallam to travel into the mountains to acquire the giant eagle eggs needed for

his plan's execution. In the borderlands hostel of Jorand's Inn, Hallam contacted an adventuring party consisting of a half-elven ranger, an elven cleric/magic-user, and identical human twin sisters (a thief and an illusionist). Heavily prompted by the elf, the NPC party refused the odious egg-stealing request of Hallam. Later that night, the warlord's mage used his *figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl)* to spy out the NPC party's camp. He waited until the elf was on watch, then used the owl to douse the unfortunate with a potion of *petrification* (new magical item, see sidebar).

When the petrified elf was discovered by his comrades the next morning, they were forced to return to the inn and seek Hallam's aid in restoring him to flesh. Hallam required that they steal the giant eagle eggs before he would restore the elf.

After an unsuccessful attempt in which the ranger suffered a severe injury, the illusionist used an *improved phantasmal force* spell to distract the eagles while the thief (rendered *invisible*) climbed the cliff face, enabling them to steal the eggs. The NPC adventurers then fled to the forest for cover as they journeyed toward their rendezvous with the mage at the ruins of an old keep where he is currently based.

Wuoldern, an outcast hermit dwarf, was telepathically contacted by the eagles to seek aid after the eggs were stolen. Since Jorand's Inn was the nearest outpost of civilization, he immediately set out to find help there. The eagles continued their search of the surrounding terrain, but due to the cover provided by the forest, the great birds have been unable to locate the NPC party. Wuoldern arrives at Jorand's Inn at mid-morning of Day 7 on the Time Table (see sidebar on following page).

The DM should bring the PC party to Jorand's Inn by whatever means works well in the campaign. The adventure could be sprung on the PCs as they stop for a drink or a bed for the night, or while they are on their way home after the last adventure.

When Wuoldern arrives at Jorand's Inn, he immediately goes to speak with the innkeeper (the two know each other since Wuoldern occasionally comes here to trade). After a brief discussion, Jorand and Wuoldern approach the PCs wherever they may be (the taproom, their rooms, the common room, etc.) with the following offer:

> "Pardon," Jorand says, "but my friend would like a few words with you. This is Wuoldern. He lives in the mountains hereabouts, and he . . . his friends, rather, have a . . . um, a problem I think you could help them with."
>
> Wuoldern, a medium-built dwarf with a leather eye-patch, steps forward and places his hands on the table. He fixes you with his single, steely gray eye and says, "Some great eagles asked me for help. Their eggs were stolen by three humans. One of the humans was badly wounded. All of them ran for the edge of the woods." Pausing for a moment, he then asks, "Will you get their eggs back?"

Wuoldern expects a yes or no answer to his question. Due to his taciturn nature, the PCs may be confused by the lack of information. Wuoldern is willing to answer one or two questions to clarify the situation, but he will soon become impatient and will repeat his question.

If the party accepts this plea for help, Jorand volunteers the following information:

> "Good, it's settled then. As for what I know, these three kidnappers match the description of a group of adventurers that stayed in my inn not too long ago. There were four of them then: two women, an elf, and a half-breed. They went north and came back the next day after the elf had been turned to stone by a basilisk in the woods. They left him in the care of a mage. I sold the mage a wagon, and he left with the statue. I don't know what arrangements were made between the mage and these adventurers, but someone else might. You could try asking around my inn."

If any party members take umbrage at the "half-breed" remark, Jorand rephrases it to "half-elf." If the PCs remain upset, they may need to be reminded that Jorand is master of the entire inn, and everyone who lives there will come to his aid.

If queried for further information, Jorand can recall that the mage arrived over a week ago and paid his bill three days past. The NPC party arrived sometime later and left the same day as the mage. Wuoldern, though he has no further information, is willing to accompany the PC party if asked. He will always offer to accompany them if they look weak.

Wuoldern: AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12; D 10; C 15; I 9; W 13; Ch 10; ML 11; battle axe, chain mail, shield. Wuoldern is 4'1" tall, weighs 145 lbs., and has grizzled black hair and steel-gray eyes.

Wuoldern enjoys the uncluttered silence of the mountain peaks. His voice is harsh and rough from little use, and when he speaks, he does so in short, clipped sentences. He lost his right eye to a friend's mishap with a crossbow and always wears a leather patch. If asked about the NPCs, Wuoldern will specify that the NPC party entered the western edge of the forest yesterday (Day 6), but he knows nothing more regarding them.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

You should not give the PCs any unearned hints that the NPC party is predominantly good-aligned. The PCs will need to interact with the folk at the

Potion of Petrification

Hallam invented the formula for this potion after a fortunate (for him) encounter with a basilisk. Seeing the possibility of incapacitating foes without harming them, Hallam devised this recipe.

The potion has the effects of a basilisk gaze on one person. When a full dose touches flesh, a save vs. petrification must be made. If failed, the victim is turned to stone; a successful save results in no adverse effects. The potion is typically sealed in a breakable ceramic flask and thrown as a grenadelike missile, though the bottle must be a direct hit to have any chance of being effective; splashes have no effect.

A successful *dispel magic* spell against 12th-level magic negates the potion's effect. However, a successful system shock roll must be made to survive the transition back to flesh.

A victim affected by this potion radiates magic under a *detect magic* or similar spell.

XP Value: 500

inn to determine where the thieves are headed, fight through the creatures in the forest, and finally confront Hallam and his retinue in the abandoned ruins where he is currently camping out. If the PCs do not intercept the NPC party, then they will have to face Hallam alone.

Depending on the decisions of the players, the tone of the encounters and the progression of events can vary widely. If the party does not interact with the innfolk, the PCs will not know that the NPC party was coerced into stealing the eggs and will probably assume that the NPCs are evil. If, however, the PCs learn that the NPC party is headed for the old keep ruins, they might proceed directly to the encounter with Hallam and bypass the encounter with the NPC party.

Because of this complexity, all of the NPCs actions are detailed in the Time Table sidebar so that you will be able to judge how the story line may be altered by the PCs actions. NPC statistics, personality, and strategies are detailed in the "NPC Party" sidebar.

Jorand's Inn

The inn, actually more of a fortified hostel, was established by Jorand's grandfather as a safe place to stay on the notoriously unsafe borderland road. It has remained a family business since then, enduring many attacks by unfriendly and often desperate forces. Even with the higher-than-normal overhead (which includes weapon purchases and repairs), the prices are reasonable and the inn remains a relatively comfortable place to stay.

The stockade wall around the inn is a wooden palisade. The ground floor of the main structure is made of stone, and the upper stories are of half-timbered construction. The doors and gates are of heavy timber and can be quickly barred. The windows of the first and higher floors are simply narrow openings with shutters slitted for crossbow fire. The outside areas are illuminated by torches, while the inside areas have lamps and candles during the hours of darkness.

Guards on duty wear chain mail and carry long swords and daggers. The guard at the gate (area 1) also carries a halberd, and the guard atop the watchtower (area 16) has a crossbow and 20 bolts. Off-duty guards wear no armor, nor do they carry weapons, but they do act as bouncers for the hostel. However Edhel, the captain of the guard, will always carry his *war hammer +2*.

Because of the quick turnover of guests at the inn, none that are currently here were present when either Hallam or the NPC party stayed as guests. The inn's current guests have not been specifically detailed; most of them are traveling merchants and their guards. The DM should feel free to detail them as needed for this adventure or as hooks for future adventures.

In dealing with the innfolk, the DM should remember that these people live on the borderlands and operate under a siege mentality. They are defensive and careful in what they say, since anyone could turn out to be an enemy. However, the general attitude will be mitigated

Time Table

Day 1: Hallam approaches the NPC party at Jorand's Inn. The NPCs reject the mage's assignment to steal giant eagle eggs because of heavy prompting from the party's elven cleric-mage. The weather is warm and cloudy.

Day 2: The NPC party sets out to adventure north beyond the forest. Hallam orders his *figurine of wondrous power* into its normal owl form to spy out the NPC party's camp. Later that night, the mage sends the owl to drop a potion of *petrification* on the unfortunate NPC elf. With this accomplished, Hallam travels back to the inn. The weather is cool and cloudy.

Day 3: The NPC party returns to Jorand's Inn with their *petrified* comrade. Hallam agrees to help if the NPCs accept his mission to steal the eagles' eggs. The NPCs have no choice but to accept. They agree to bring the eggs to Hallam at the ruins of an old keep, about 13 miles northeast of the inn. The weather is cool, with light rain.

Day 4: Early in the day, the NPC party travels northwest toward the mountains. Hallam eats a good breakfast before setting off toward the northeast, carrying the *petrified* NPC elf in his newly purchased wagon. The weather is cool with intermittent rain.

Day 5: The NPCs reaches the mountains. Their first attempt to steal the giant eagle eggs fails, leaving the NPC party's ranger badly wounded. The weather is cool with light rain.

Day 6: The NPC party succeeds on its second attempt to steal the eggs. The eagles pursue but lose track of the NPC party in the forest. The distraught eagles find Wuoldern, the dwarven hermit, and beg him to go seek aid. The NPC party rests the night at area A. Hallam, who has been monitoring their progress through the use of *magic mirror* spells, sends out a patrol of Tyr Anrad soldiers to escort the NPCs to the ruins. The weather is cool and cloudy.

Day 7: The PCs arrive at Jorand's Inn, where the dwarf asks for their help. The NPCs make camp for the night at location C. The weather is cool and windy.

Day 8: Near dark, the NPC party makes camp near location D after spotting spider webs blocking the path ahead. The weather is cool and clear.

Day 9: As soon as there is enough light, the NPC party circles around the spiders' webs and continues on their way to the ruins, stopping at area F in the late evening. The weather is cool, with a light breeze.

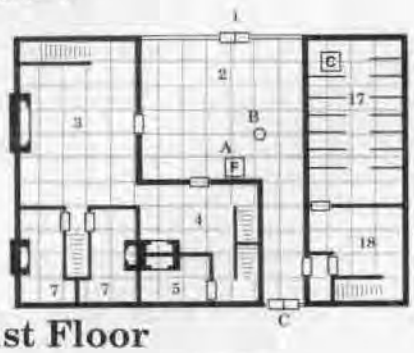
Day 10: The NPC party travels through the woods all day and makes camp off the trail near area G. The patrol sent by Hallam passes by the NPC party during the night without spotting them. The weather is warm and clear.

Day 11: The NPC party, if unhindered by the PCs, uses the tower trail and reaches the ruins at midday to rendezvous with the mage. The weather is warm and clear.

Day 12: Unless the PCs intervene, Hallam thwarts the NPCs' attempt to rescue their *petrified* comrade (See "NPC Actions" in The NPC Party sidebar). He then uses a *dream* spell to order the patrol to return to the ruins (see ruins area 4 and "Hallam's Plans"). When the soldiers return, Hallam departs with the eggs, leaving the *petrified* elf with the beaten NPC party as a backhanded condolence. The weather is warm and windy.

JORAND'S INN

1 square = 5'



1st Floor

3rd Floor

5th Floor

4th Floor

Cellar

2nd Floor

by each person's nature.

Any employee or patron of the inn can tell the PCs that there is a basilisk in the forest. The workers know that a mage stayed at the hostel in the last week, and the NPC party was also here in the last week. Other innfolk possess no additional useful information for this adventure. Remember to take each NPC's alignment into account when role-playing the innfolk. For example, a neutral NPC will reveal important information only when some benefit can be realized from the transaction.

1. Main Gate. The gate is made of heavy wood banded with bronze and can be secured with a bar on the inside. On either side of the gate are two "crows' nests" that can be reached by ladders from the courtyard. These guard posts are manned around the clock by Big Mor (see area 13 for statistics), Byram, and Othon (see area 12).

2. Courtyard. The tamped earth shows many sets of footprints as the inhabitants of the hostelry go about their business. A set of double doors (A) set into the ground directly across from the main gate leads to the cellar (area 6). The inn's well (B) stands in the open courtyard about 10' northeast of the cellar doors. A postern gate (C) is well guarded by crossbow slits on the floor above. One of the bouncers guards the door to the tap room (area 3) and keeps an eye on the courtyard.

3. Taproom. This simply furnished room contains six trestle tables and a bar. A meal sells for 5 sp, ale for 1 cp a tankard, and wine for 1 sp a cup. Jorand usually tends the bar. A bouncer sits watchfully near the hearth while a barmaid serves the tables, making frequent trips to the bar and the kitchen (area 4).

Ostler Jorand, innkeeper: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; club. Jorand is 6'1" tall, weighs 180 lbs., and has brown balding hair and blue eyes. During the day and evening hours, he can usually be found in the taproom. At night, he sleeps in area 10.

Jorand is a pessimist who believes in his heart that the inn is doomed; the monstrous attacks of the dangerous borderlands will eventually overcome it. Anyone who gives him new hope (by destroying a major forest evil, for example) will become a fast friend. He guides his hostel with a firm and even hand but is not above playing with words to get the better of a deal. He knows about the abandoned ruins to the northeast but may not mention them unless specifically asked.

Lauremi, barmaid (innkeeper's daughter): AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; knife. Lauremi is 5'6" tall, weighs 132 lbs., and has blond hair and light-blue eyes. She serves in the taproom during the day and helps cook in the kitchen (area 4) in the evening. At night, she sleeps in area 11.

Doe-eyed Lauremi is sickened by her sister Alana's intelligent, honest nature and is jealous that Alana gets the larger share of their parents' affection. Because Lauremi is unscrupulous and selfish, her parents have refused her demands to be allowed to leave the hostel. So Lauremi quietly broods in hatred of everything: her life, her family, the inn, and all its patrons. It would delight her to see it all come crashing

down. On Day 1, she overheard the NPC party, led by the elf, reject the mage's initial offer because of prior engagements.

4. Kitchen. Fires burn in the huge hearths and broad oven of this well-stocked kitchen. The servants are often found here helping out the head cook, Goodwife Alaise.

Goodwife Alaise, innkeeper's wife: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; kitchen knife (treat as dagger). The goodwife is 5'4" tall, weighs 110 lbs., and has dark brown hair and hazel eyes. She supervises the kitchen all day and long into the evening before retiring to area 10 at night.

Alaise is curious about guests and used to be considered an inveterate gossip. However, her information gathering has helped keep the inn from being internally subverted in the past. She acts as the peacemaker of the hostel when personalities flair. She and Jorand have a year-old son, Jorand Jr., who spends his time in a crib in the kitchen. Alaise has a 45% chance to know any information that someone else at the inn knows.

5. Servants' Quarters. Four pallets with footlockers furnish this bare room, which is occupied by three servants who work for Jorand.

Arllier, Lyam, and **Roquent** (laborers): AL CG, N, LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 6, 4, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 8.

These three are wastrels and wanderers who have been given beds and meals in exchange for general labor. Throughout the day and evening they can be found in the kitchen helping Goodwife Alaise.

6. Cellar. Bottles of wine, casks of ale, and other supplies are stored in this room. A secret passage near the southwest corner exits into the gully of a nearby stream; the opening is well screened by bushes. Only Jorand, Edhel, and Alaise know about the escape tunnel.

7. Guest Rooms. These four rooms are all much alike. Each has two beds and two chests. One or two people can stay in each room for 1 sp a night. The linens are cleaned and aired daily by one of the barmaids or servants.

8. Common Sleeping Room. Jorand charges 5 cp per night for floor space in this room. While beds are not provided, there is always a fire in the hearth during cold nights.

9. Hallways. Any PC who enters the rooms of this floor or those above will be considered a trespasser. The reaction of the inn's residents will vary from a polite request to leave to an outright attack or yell or alarm, depending on who is encountered, the PCs' prior actions, and an encounter roll.

10. Innkeeper's Quarters. This comfortable chamber houses Jorand, his wife, and their year-old son, Jorand Jr.

11. Women's Quarters. The innkeeper's daughters, Alana and Lauremi, live here along with Caitlynn, the inn's only female guard.

Alana, barmaid (innkeeper's daughter): AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 15; ML 12; knife. Alana is 5'7" tall, weighs 135 lbs., and has black hair and dark green eyes. She cleans the guest rooms during the day and serves in the taproom during the evening hours.

Alana is a very intelligent 16-year-old who wants to leave the hostel as soon as possible. She hoards books of all kinds in the hope of using the knowledge gained in the outside world. She is forthright and honest by nature and will not intentionally deceive anyone. She knows that the NPC party sought out the mage on Day 3.

Caitlynn, guard: AL NG; AC 5; MV 9; F1/C3; hp 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, W 15; ML 14; SA +1 to hit; chain mail, long sword, dagger, *ring of elemental fire command* (acts as *ring of fire resistance*). Caitlynn is 6' tall, weighs 175 lbs., and has short red hair and deep brown eyes. When she is not on duty on the tower roof, Caitlynn helps out as a bouncer in the taproom (area 3), but she bitterly resents being mistaken for a serving maid (which doesn't happens very often).

Caitlynn served Idun (see *Legends & Lore,* page 182) or some other deity appropriate to the campaign for three years, but she has now decided that peace does not counter war, only war counters war. Hard-hearted, she turned from the peaceful ways of her goddess to train intensively for combat, thereby becoming a dual-classed cleric-fighter. She currently carries no spells, but she has not completely forsaken her goddess and will pray for spells in a time of crisis.

The ravages of orcs brought about both her change of heart and her journey to the borderlands. Given an opportunity, she will stop at nothing to slay as many orcs as possible. She is not averse to joining an adventuring party (the PCs) as long as they fight evil (orcs in particular).

Caitlynn's magical ring is not activated, and she does not think of it as anything but a *ring of fire resistance.* It will activate only when she is subjected to a magical fire attack doing at least 50 hp damage. The ring always returns to its less powerful form when it changes ownership.

12. Guards' Quarters. Othon, Byram, and Esmer sleep here.

Othon, guard: AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg by weapon type; Ch 14; SA +1 to hit with daggers due to specialization; ML 10; chain mail, long sword, four throwing daggers.

Othon is 5'11" tall, weighs 200 lbs., and has curly dark brown hair and chestnut-colored eyes. He is posted at the main gates (area 1) at night. He sleeps here during the evening shift so that he can spend his days outdoors in the sun, guarding the door to area 3.

Othon is very good with his daggers, and he knows it. This sometimes leads to overconfidence in areas where he is not as skilled. Othon can motivate people if he desires (Ch 14), even though they might normally not get along with him. He is cold toward children, including Terynon the stable boy. Othon saw the NPC party head off toward the northwest on Day 4.

Byram, guard: AL CG; AC 5; MV 9; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Ch 13; ML 11; long sword, chain mail (not armored while sleeping).

Byram is 5'9" tall, weighs 150 lbs., and has blond hair and brown eyes. He sleeps here during the day so that he can be alert for guard duty on the tower roof (area 16) in the evening. Byram spends his off-duty hours in the taproom (area 3).

Even though he doesn't know when to stop pressing his point in his rather squeaky voice, Bryam's genial personality has endeared him to many of his fellows, who will break up any brawls that result should Byram's personality get on someone's nerves.

Esmer, guard: AL CG; AC 5; MV 9; F1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; long sword, chain mail (not armored while sleeping), silver bracelet (worth 8 gp).

Esmer is 5'11" tall, weighs 165 lbs., and has light blond hair and green eyes. Like Byram, he has evening duty (at the main gate, area 1) and so sleeps here during the day. He joins his fellow guards in the taproom (area 3) when not on duty.

Impulsiveness is what drove Esmer to the borderlands; the good food and lodging with bouts of excitement is what keeps him here. His rash behavior often leads to misunderstandings, but Esmer is quick to admit his own faults and ask forgiveness. He saw the mage ride east down the road on Day 2.

13. Guard's Quarters. Edhel and Big Mor, as officers, share this room.

Edhel, guard leader (Jorand's brother): AL LG; AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16; ML 12; chain mail, *war hammer* +2, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

Edhel is 5'8" tall, weighs 155 lbs., and has sandy brown hair and blue eyes. He tours all the guard posts during the day and evening shifts, with more time spent in the taproom (area 3) during the evening so that he can keep an eye on his off-duty guards.

Edhel feels that he is not achieving his potential protecting his older brother's inn, but because of his strong family ties, he does the best job he can. Without someone to take his place at the inn, Edhel will not go traipsing off into the woods with the PCs. He remembers that the mage approached the NPC party and they apparently rejected his offer on Day 1.

Big Mor, guard: AL CN; AC 3; MV 9; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16; ML 14; SA +1 to hit with sword, +1 to hit with missiles; chain mail, long sword, dagger.

Big Mor is 6'6" tall, weighs 225 lbs., and has straight black hair and brown eyes. He is on duty at the main gate (area 1) during the day. In the evening, he can be found in the taproom (area 3).

The best natural fighter of all the guards, Mor is truly brave but his independent nature causes him to chafe if anyone orders him to do something. Jorand has given him leave to use his own initiative in deciding to act, both in times of battle and peace. Mor saw the mage drive the wagon to the northeast on Day 4.

14. Roof. This roof is flat with machicoliated sides to allow it to act as a firing platform. None of the guards are regularly stationed here, but Edhel will order two or more of them to the roof if the inn comes under attack.

15. Armory. This room contains enough extra weapons and leather armor to supply the inn staff and up to eight guests if the inn is attacked.

16. Tower Roof. This roof also acts as a defensive platform and gives a good view of the surrounding area. During the day, Caitlynn is on duty here. She is relieved for the evening shift by Byram. No one is posted here at night, as all the guards are human and it is useless to mount a lookout in the dark.

17. Stable. The stable can hold up to 12 horses. The stalls are supplied from the hayloft (area 20) above. The connect-

Forest Random Encounters
(Roll 1d20)

1-2 **Aurochs** (1d4+1): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 6; hp 30, 29, 26, 20, 19; THAC0 15; #AT 2 horns or 1 charge with trample; Dmg 1-6/1-6 or 3-18 and 1-6/1-6; SA charge; SZ L; ML 10; XP 270; DRAGON® issue #137.

Aurochs are a form of now-extinct herd animal that was native to the forests of Europe. They are similar to buffalo but smaller, with wider horns. Aurochs were detailed in "Into the Age of Mammals" (DRAGON Magazine #137), but the above information is sufficient for this adventure.

3-4 **Orcs** (1d4+4): INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 8 (×2), 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; XP 15; MC1; long swords, spears. These orcs are hunting food for their mountain tribe.

5-6 **Snake, poisonous** (1-6): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 15, 11, 9, 8, 6 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (see description in MC); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC1.

7-9 **Stag** (1-4): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 12, 10, 8, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA stampede; SZ M; ML 3; XP 35; MC1 (Animal, Herd, Antelope).

10-11 **Wolf** (1-10): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 15 (×2), 14, 13 (×3), 12, 9, 8, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65; MC1.

12-13 **Guard Patrol.** This patrol has been sent by Hallam to find the NPC party.

Sergeant, corporal, and **men-at-arms** (8): see area 1 of the Ruins for complete statistics.

Merist, lieutenant: AL LE; AC 2; MV 9; F4; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with missiles; D 16; ML 13; XP 270; chain mail, shield, *long sword +1*.

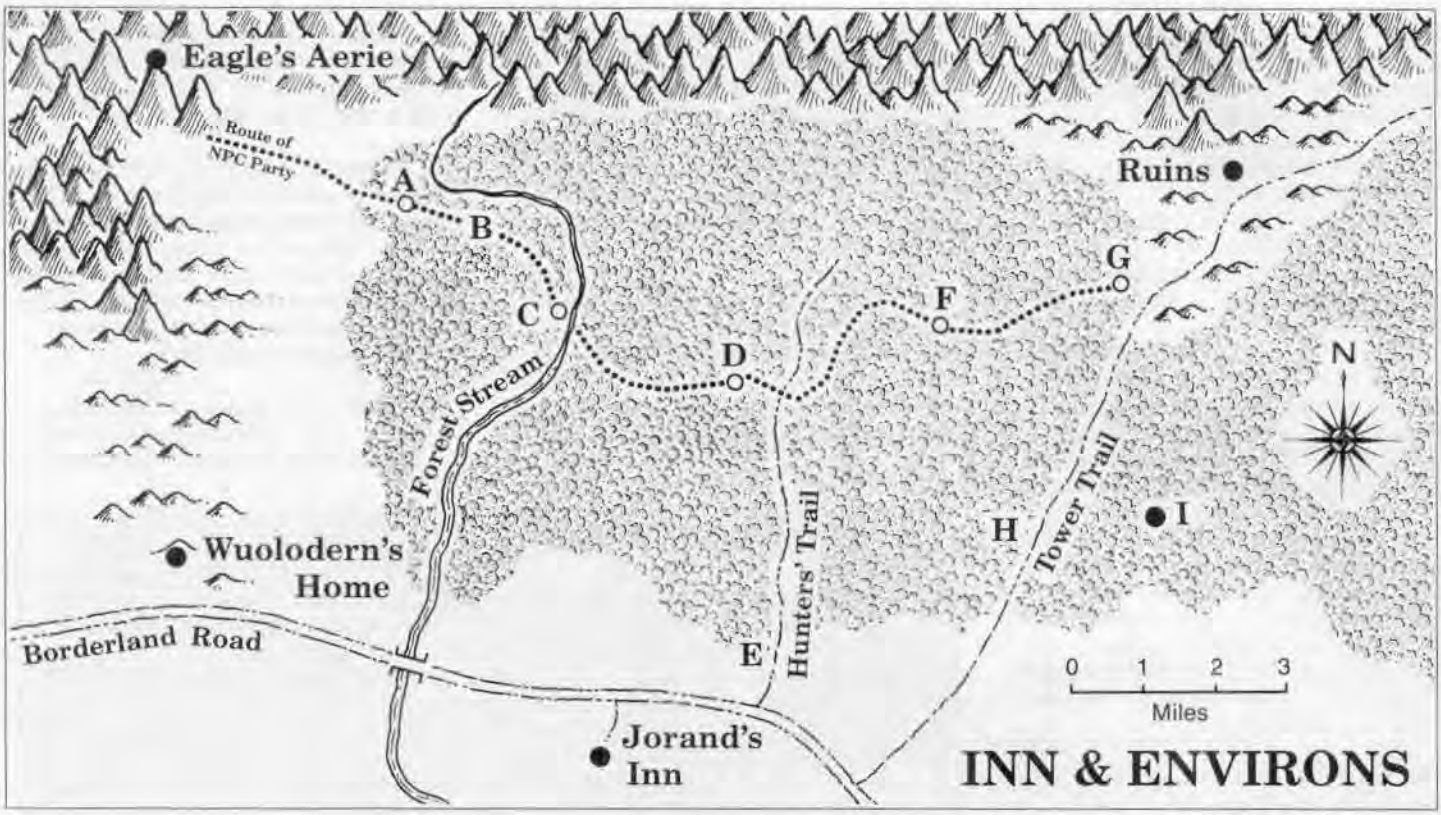
14-16 **Bear, brown** (1-6): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 37, 31, 30, 25, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA hug for 2d6 hp damage; SZ L; ML 10; XP 420; MC1.

17-19 **Boar, wild** (1-12): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 25, 24, 20, 19 (×4), 17, 16, 15, 13, 8; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SZ S; ML 9; XP 175; MC1.

20 **Werebear:** INT exceptional; AL CG; AC 2; MV 9; HD 7+3; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8; SA hug for 2d8 hp damage; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons; summon 1-6 brown bears in 2d6 turns; cure disease in 1-4 weeks; SZ L; ML 13; MC1 (Lycanthrope, Werebear).

This werebear is encountered in human form, appearing as a grizzled man dressed in furs and leather. He reacts warily, but if the party acts friendly, he responds in kind. He knows nothing about the NPC party, but if the PCs are willing to wait, he goes off for an hour to ask the bears in the woods for information (with an 85% chance of success in locating the NPCs' last campsite).

If approached with hostility, the werebear retreats. In all cases he attempts to keep his lycanthropy a secret.



ing door to the bathhouse (area 18) is infrequently used and usually locked.

Isarn, groom: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; dagger. Isarn is 5'10" tall, weighs 171 lbs., and has black hair and gray eyes. He spends all day and evening in the barn or the loft, and sleeps above in the groom's quarters (area 19).

Isarn keeps mostly to himself and talks only rarely with Jorand and Alaise. Because unscrupulous people have, in the past, made attempts to take over the inn, he distrusts all of the inn's guests. Terynon, the stable boy, is his son. His wife died many years ago. Isarn set aside a stall for the petrified NPC elf on Day 3 and knows that Jorand sold the mage a wagon.

Terynon, stable boy (Isarn's son): AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; potion of *healing*, boot knife. Terynon is 4'11" tall, weighs 95 lbs., and has brown hair and blue eyes. He helps his father out in the stable during the day and shares his quarters at area 19.

Terynon is innocent of life's darker side due to his father's overprotectiveness. He is also curious, seeking out information in ways his father wouldn't approve in order to get a handle on the world around him. Terynon found the potion of *healing* on a dead adventurer near the edge of the forest and has never told anyone about it. He knows that the mage left at mid-morning on Day 2, without provisions, and returned that same evening. Terynon also has a 25% chance to know anyone else's information (except for Othon).

18. Bathhouse. This room holds three wooden tubs and a small stove. The tubs are used for washing both people and clothing. A bath costs 1 gp; laundry costs 1 sp per armful of clothes.

19. Grooms' Quarters. Isarn and Terynon live together here. Intrusion into this area by PCs will be handled in the same way as trespassing in areas 9-16.

20. Loft. This space contains both hay and grain for the stabled animals. There is a trapdoor with a ladder leading to the stable (area 17) below.

21. Stable Roof. This flat roof, much like the other two, is also used for defense (see area 14).

The Forest

The forest lies against the foothills to the north of Jorand's Inn, with a mountain chain to the north. It is comprised primarily of broadleaf and evergreen trees that rise up from thick undergrowth. The forest supports a large range of normal animals, yet it also is home to a fair number of humanoids and monsters. The DM should check for random encounters four times a day (dawn, noon, sunset, and midnight). An encounter occurs on a roll of 1-2 on 1d10. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d20 and see the "Forest Random Encounters" sidebar).

Encounters need not be confrontations. Most normal animals will avoid the party unless molested, while other encounters could benefit the party if handled properly.

Whenever the PCs come across the NPCs' trail (see map), the DM should secretly roll a check for rangers and anyone else who has tracking proficiency (*PH*, page 64). If the check is success-

The NPC Party

Kyra (human female): AL N; AC 8; MV 12 (currently 6); T6; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 13, C 9, I 11, W 14, Ch 14; ML 14; PP 40, OL 30, FT 30, MS 67, HS 67, DN 30, CW 75, RL 5; short sword, leather armor, potion of *polymorph self, ring of shocking grasp.* Kyra is 5'5" tall, weighs 125 lbs., and has brown hair and hazel eyes.

Kyra is a perceptive thief who puts on a mousy and boring front to those outside her adventuring group. She hangs back and lets the others, specifically Lurmien, do most of the talking. Kyra prefers to carefully gather information before acting, and she is nervous about doing something without solid research. When plans are being made, she will speak up against anything rash or hasty. Kyra and Lurmien are identical twin sisters.

Lurmien (human female): AL CG; AC 7; MV 12 (currently 6); I5; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 17, C 14, I 15, W 12, Ch 14; ML 14; dagger, *ring of chameleon power, wand of paralyzation* (six charges remaining). Lurmien is Kyra's identical twin but weighs a few pounds more. Oddly, Lurmien is left handed, although her sister is right-handed.

Lurmien is an illusionist. Her traveling spell book includes *burning hands, change self, colorspray, spook, ventriloquism; improved phantasmal force, invisibility, levitate; tongues,* and *wraithform.* She memorizes all these spells each day unless she feels it best to double up on some of the spells.

Lurmien's father tried to force her to marry a foppish noble, but she ran away to join the adventuring group of which her sister was already a member. Because of her experiences, she detests everything associated with nobility. Lurmien is driven to obtain power in order to guard herself and her friends. Though she is bold in her approach to strangers, she is cautious about revealing too much about herself and her companions.

Rolant (half-elf male): AL CG; AC 3; MV 9; R5; hp 37 (currently 0); THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 14, I 13, W 14, Ch 12; ML 14; long sword, dagger, chain mail, *dagger +2, dust of diminution* (three uses). Rolant is 5'10" tall, weighs 137 lbs., and has brown hair and amber eyes.

Rolant leads the party but acknowledges that Aldairenon, the party's elven cleric-wizard is better at strategic planning. Rolant cares little for money and spends or gives it away quickly. He is excellent at judging the odds of a situation but tends to use the same plan in situations that are only superficially similar. Currently, he hovers on the brink of unconsciousness because of the wounds he suffered when he fell off a ledge during the NPCs' unsuccessful first attempt to steal the giant eagle eggs. Lurmien and Kyra are dragging along him on a stretcher; they left his battered armor behind in the mountains to reduce the weight.

Aldairenon (elf male, currently *petrified*): AL NG; AC 5; MV 12; C4/M5; hp 12; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 10, C 12, I 14, W 16, Ch 9; ML 14; eight *sling bullets +1, bracers of defense AC 5,* flail. Aldairenon is 4'10" tall, weighs 103 lbs., and has dark-red hair and deep-green eyes.

Aldairenon is exacting when planning for the good of the party. At other times he can relax and appear carefree. He worships Corellon (see *Monster Mythology,* page 21, or select another deity) and plays the harp for enjoyment.

NPC Actions

Kyra and Lurmien are very unhappy. Aldairenon the elf has been turned to stone. In order to save him, the remaining party members were forced to steal the giant eagles' eggs, which they know (but won't admit to each other) was wrong. Rolant, the half-elf ranger, was severely wounded, causing the sisters to struggle through the forest while dragging him on a litter at half their normal movement rate. This effort has left them tired and distraught. Finally, even if they manage to turn over the eggs undamaged, the sisters are worried that Hallam will not keep his end of the bargain.

Therefore, Kyra and Lurmien will try their best to avoid encountering the PCs if they detect them first. If one of the sisters spots the PC party before being seen, Lurmien uses her *ring of chameleon power* to blend in with the foliage, while Kyra hides in the shadows of the trees. If the NPCs are spotted, Lurmien attempts to parley with the PCs but is nervous and stays on guard, expecting an attack. If threatened, the sisters react as follows:

Lurmien casts a *levitate* spell on herself and Rolant, then rises 20' in the air. As Lurmien continues to parley, Kyra stays hidden as long as the PC party does not act overtly hostile. If the PCs do attack, she defends herself for three rounds (using her *ring of shocking grasp* whenever appropriate).

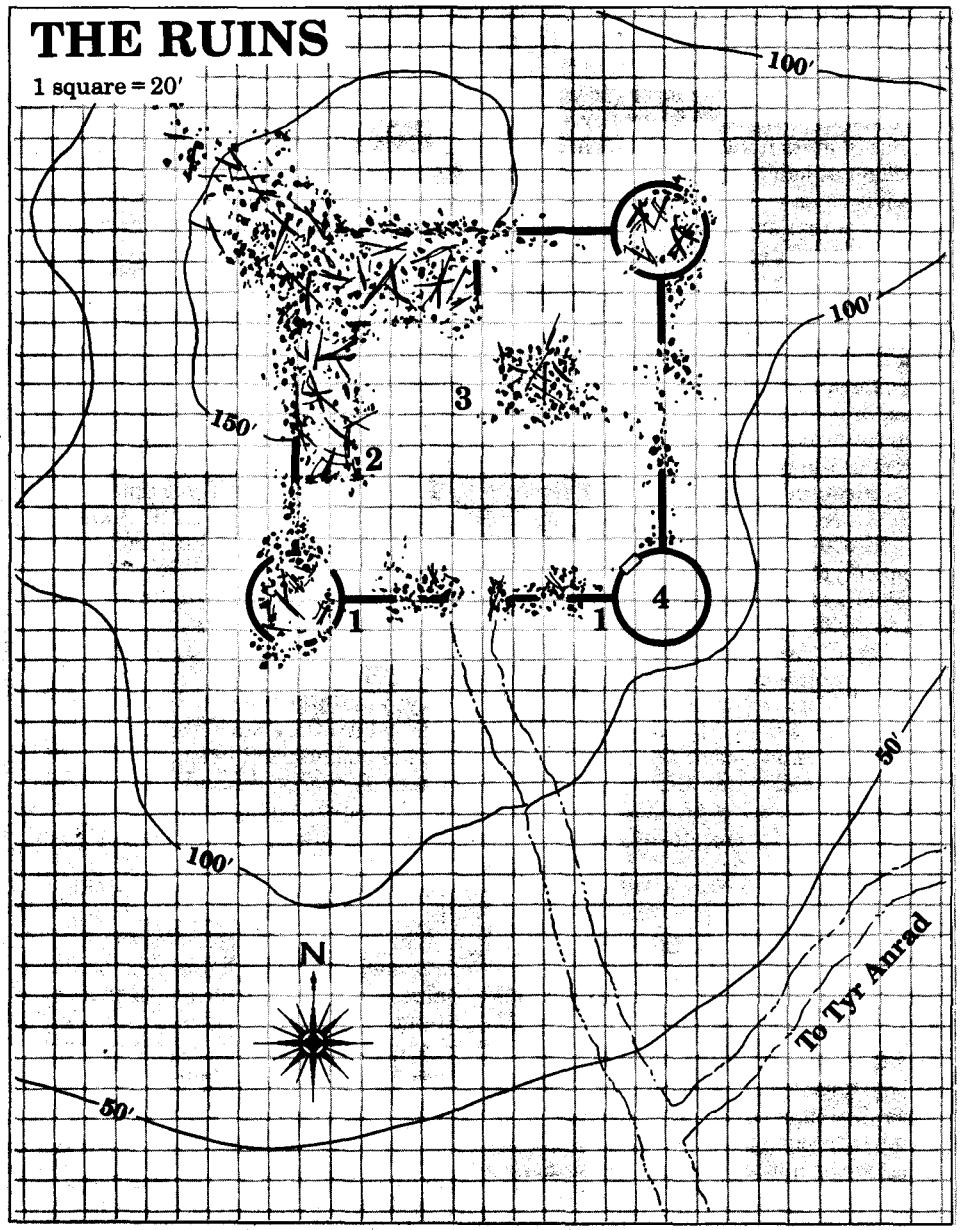
When negotiations break down, Lurmien uses her *wand of paralyzation,* targeting spell-casters first. If the party still looks strong, the sisters attempt an escape. Kyra drinks her potion of *polymorph self,* changes into a swift bird, and tows Lurmien and Rolant (who are weightless due to the *levitate* spell) toward the rendezvous with Hallam.

If the PCs convince Kyra and Lurmien to join forces against Hallam (which shouldn't take much convincing), the sisters ask how they can fit into the PCs' plan. It is up to the PCs to work these two NPCs and their skills and abilities into any plan to defeat Hallam.

Kyra and Lurmien have their own plan, which they worked out during the tedious hours of dragging the unconscious ranger through the forest. If the two adventuring groups never meet, or if the PCs can't come up with a workable plan, the sisters will put the following plan into effect when they reach the ruins of the old keep.

While *invisible,* Lurmien casts an *improved phantasmal force* spell of all three NPC party members and talks to Hallam, while Kyra takes Lurmien's *ring of chameleon power* and sneaks up close to the wagon containing the *petrified* elf. If Hallam is willing to cure the elf before receiving the eggs, the sisters hand over the eggs as soon as the elf is revived. If Hallam insists on getting the eggs first, this proves to the sisters that he has no intention of keeping the bargain. In this case, Kyra use some of Rolant's *dust of diminution* on the stone elf and snatches him away. The sisters plan to take the eggs and go elsewhere to obtain aid for their friend.

Kyra and Lurmien are willing to listen to any PC plan as long as it doesn't involving losing the elf or the eggs. Only a very good plan will sway them to risk the eggs, and nothing will cause them to endanger the elf. If the PCs have some realistic plan to cure the stone elf (such as using the services of a high-level mage who owes them a favor), the sisters will agree to return the eggs to the giant eagles.



ful, that PC has found the NPCs tracks.

For overland movement, the following movement costs (MC), calculated as per the *DMG*, page 125, should prove helpful:

Road = ½ MC
Plains = 1 MC
Forest trail = 1½ MC
Forest = 3 MC
Foothill trail = 2 MC

From Jorand's Inn, a party traveling at a movement rate of 9 needs one day to circle around the forest to point A. It also takes one day to cut through the forest to reach point D. An unencumbered party (MV 12) could reach point G from the inn via the tower trail in one day. Travel from point G to the tower ruins takes half a day because of the hilly terrain.

The NPC party is moving at the equivalent of MV 9, even though it is encumbered, by traveling 15 hours per day instead of 10.

Forest Encounter Areas

A. Into the Woods. This is where the NPC party first entered the woods. Their route is not a trail, merely an area where they forced their way through the undergrowth.

B. Ogre Camp. These ogres have come down from the mountains to do some hunting. They camped here last night and are just getting ready for another day. During the afternoon, they will return to this camp for lunch. If they are not surprised by the PCs, they bellow and charge toward this new and more exciting prey.

Ogres (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 25, 24, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175; MC1.

Mixed in with the first ogre's lucky rock collection (river washed stones and chunks of granite) are a 100-gp tourmaline, a 25-gp carnelian, a 10-gp hematite, and a 10-gp turquoise.

The second ogre has only 3 gp that he has dropped down inside his belted tunic. The worthless, half-rotted carcass of a wolverine hangs from his belt.

The last ogre has a potion of *glibness* and a potion of *hill giant strength* in a rotted leather bag he uses as a belt pouch. The potions have been tossed in along with less desirable possessions (rotted furs, rusty bits of metal, gnawed bones, etc.).

C. Dazzling Beauty. From a distance, the PCs hear a beautiful song in counterpoint to the sounds of splashing water. If the PCs call out, a lovely female voice warns them not to approach or to peek, so that she may robe herself (taking one round to do so). If the party does not call out, there is an 80% chance that the nymph will detect the intruders and warn them not to come any closer. Any PC who sees the nymph must make a saving throw vs. spells. If the save is failed but the nymph has time to garb herself, the PC is blinded. If the nymph is still unclothed when the PC spies her, a failed save results in death.

If the PCs do not stop to investigate the lovely singing, the nymph will hear their passage and will peek at them from the cover of the trees. There is a 5% chance that she will give them aid if necessary (such as a *cure* spell). If specifically asked, she can tell the general location of the NPC party.

Nymph: INT exceptional; AL N(G); AC 9; MV 12; HD 3; hp 11; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA casts spells as 7th-level druid; SD *dimension door,* sight of

nymph causes blindness or death; SZ M; ML 7; MC1.

D. A Sticky Situation. A group of large spiders has recently built a network of webs across the trail. The spiders lie in wait until the adventurers disturb the webs or attempt to circumvent them. The spiders have run many single strands through the surrounding forest for a distance of almost 100 yards to act as tripwires. Only those PCs with the ability to detect traps have a chance to avoid the strands. One spider (hp 5) investigates any disturbance. If it is attacked, it vibrates a distress signal into the web to summon its brethren in two rounds.

Large spiders (17): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 8, 7 (×3), 6 (×3), 5 (×3), 4 (×2), 3, 2 (×2), 1 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (at +2); SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC1.

DM Note: If the PCs come through this area after the NPC party (as determined by the Time Table sidebar), one spider will have been paralyzed and subsequently killed. The NPC illusionist used her wand (deduct one charge) to take out the sentry before the distress signal was sent, and the NPC thief utilized her abilities to get the party past the webs unmolested.

E. Have a Nice Trip. Four sprites like to hang out in this section of the forest. When the sprites spot the PCs walking along the trail, the *invisible* sprites string a thin cord between two trees on either side of the trail. The lead PC must make a dexterity check at −6 or trip over the cord (damage to pride only). The sprites remain *invisible* and laugh hysterically in their squeaky little voices.

If the party attacks, the sprites retaliate with *sleep* arrows, then strip the helpless PCs of all their interesting items. If the PCs take the joke well, the sprites appear and begin asking rapid-fire questions without waiting for answers ("Hi! Are you really mortal? How does it feel to know you're dying? We're immortal! Why aren't you immortal? I'd hate knowing that I would die one day! Do you hate it? How long have you got left anyway?"). During their monologue of questions and observations, the sprites eventually mention the NPC party: "So very serious! No fun at all! Trudge, trudge, trudge! Why didn't they have the good sense to get wings?"

Sprites (4): INT very; AL N(G); AC 6; MV 9, fly 18 (B); HD 1; hp 7, 6, 5, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (sword) or 1-3 (arrow); SA poison arrows (save vs. spells or sleep 1-6 hours); SD detect good/evil 50 yards, become *invisible* at will; SZ S; ML 11; MC1.

F. Campsite. Deep in the woods, this is the NPC party's campsite on Day 9.

G. Trails Meet. This is where the NPC party camps on Day 10 and exits the forest on Day 11.

H. The Same Old Song. A wretched old harpy lives nearby, but she prefers this spot for catching prey. She has a 40% chance per hour of noticing any group of three or more people traveling along the tower trail. If she spies travelers, she flies ahead and begins singing when the group comes within range. On the third round of singing, she moves deeper into the forest. When her *charmed* victims rush after her, she stops singing and circles back to physically attack those who have not been *charmed*.

Harpy (1): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 7; hp 23; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA *charm* by song and touch; SZ M; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC1.

If the harpy takes more than 11 hp damage, she attempts to flee. The party can follow her squawks of distress back to her lair at area I.

I. Harpy Lair. The harpy's lair is a huge, messy nest of moss, bones, and sticks clumped together about 30′ up in the fork of an oak tree. In addition to some leftover squirrels, her lair contains 42 cp, 14 sp, 10 gp, a citrine (50 gp), an emerald (1,000 gp), a 6″-high wrought silver statuette of a cat (750 gp), and a silver buckle (50 gp).

The Ruins

These ruins were once the small keep of a border noble. About 300 years ago, the area was overrun by humanoids from the mountains. Since then, the ruins have been abandoned by the humanoids because they lacked the skill and tools to maintain the castle. The collapse of the northwest tower was the last straw that drove the humanoids back to their highland homes.

There isn't much left here to show that a stronghold once stood on this spot. The walls have collapsed, only one corner tower remains inhabitable on the ground floor, and the rest of the keep is mere rubble. The ruins sit atop a small hill in the rough lands between the northern edge of the forest and the mountains.

Hallam the mage chose this location because the ruins lie near the trail that leads to the warlord's keep in Tyr Anrad. Also, it is an isolated site that allows him freedom to act. He has taken the still-standing corner tower as his quarters; the guards make do in their tents among the rubble.

There is nothing of real value in the ruins. If the party insists on sifting through the rubble, they find nothing but broken pottery, orc bones, and twisted remnants of metal implements. If the trail is checked for tracks in either direction, a PC can find signs of infrequent use. However, the track leading to the ruins has been more recently traveled.

1. Guard Posts. There is one guard post at each of these locations on the less-damaged parts of the wall (day and evening hours only). If the PCs are spotted, it takes one round for the guards to scramble down the rubble to the gatehouse.

Sergeant: AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; F2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 65; chain mail, shield; ivory arm band (worth 20 gp).

Corporal and **men-at-arms** (8): AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; F1; hp 9, 8 (×2), 7, 6 (×2), 5 (×2), 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2/1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 35; chain mail, shield. Two men have healing proficiency. One of the corporals wears a wrought silver medallion of his deity (80 gp), and one of the soldiers has a gold earring (14 gp). All of the guards carry some silver (3-18 sp) and a little gold (1-4 gp).

Each soldier carries the following: long sword, two throwing daggers, knife, light crossbow with 20 bolts. Over their armor, they wear black surcoats bearing the distinctive badge of Tyr Anrad on the left shoulder: A raven with flame-orange eyes and wings outstretched holding a sword point down in its claws, all against an orange field.

Lieutenant Merist is currently on patrol (see the Forest Random Encounters entry for 12-13). He wears a helm

whose face guard is decorated with a similar design. The sword forms the nose guard, and the raven (with two 10-gp carnelians for eyes) arches up across the forehead of the helmet. The sergeant's helm is normal but is decorated with a gold band (3 gp) around the rim. A similar band but in silver (1 gp) adorns the corporals' helm. If intruders approach the guard posts, the guard to the east will leave to warn Hallam (in area 4).

2. Temporary Stables. Twenty-six horses are tied to a picket line at the west side of the courtyard. A sturdy wagon stands in the southwest corner, a bulky lump lying in the wagon bed under a canvas sheet. Lifting the tarp reveals a stone statue of an elf (this is the NPC Aldairenon; see sidebar).

3. Guards' Tents. There are three tents here, a large one for the officers and two smaller ones for the soldiers (four to a tent, sleeping in shifts). The sleeping men will take five minutes to armor themselves if their camp is attacked. If commanded otherwise, they proceed directly to combat armored with only their shields (AC 9). For complete statistics, see area 1.

4. Hallam's Tower. A guard is on duty at the entry at all times. The door is covered by a hanging woolen cloth. Inside, Hallam has set up a field cot and a bedroll covered by a richly brocaded quilt (150 gp). Other items include a field table, a leather backpack, a finely wrought silver mirror (1,000 gp) propped against the wall, and a brass brazier filled with coals in the middle of the room. Lying on the table is a stoppered flask (a potion of *petrification*) and a diary, which is actually Hallam's traveling spell book, hidden by numerous *secret page* spells.

Hallam the Fox, human male: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; W9; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 7, I 16, W 13, Ch 12; ML 13; XP 3,000; dagger, 6 darts. Hallam is 5'1" tall, weighs 103 lbs., and has wavy copper-red hair cut short, a pointy beard, brown eyes, and pale skin that sunburns easily. His nonweapon proficiencies include reading/writing, etiquette, spellcraft, heraldry, animal lore, and animal training.

Hallam's traveling spell books contain the following spells: *detect magic*, friends*, gaze reflection*, identify, read magic, unseen servant*; alter self, blur*, ESP*, forget*, misdirection; dispel magic*, hold person** (×2), *phantom steed, suggestion; charm monster, dimension door*, magic mirror, polymorph other*; dream** (asterisks (*) indicate spells that Hallam memorized for his meeting with the NPC party).

The traveling spell book on Hallam's desk contains spells of levels 3-5 and is protected by several *secret page* spells that cause it to appear to be a half-full diary. In addition, a *magic mouth* spell is set to scream, "Someone's opening your diary!" if anyone but Hallam touches the book. His second traveling spell book (which contains Hallam's 1st- and 2nd-level spells) is openly labeled as such, although it is hidden in the leather backpack that leans against the field table. This book is guarded by an *explosive runes* spell on the second page.

Hallam possesses a *figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl),* whose command word is "telflare." Its giant form has been used once. He also has a scroll containing four *magic mirror* spells (one spell used each day on Days 6-9; see Time Table sidebar); a scroll rolled up inside a trick cane (see below), containing the spells *phantom steed* and *dimension door;* a *wand of magic missiles* (26 charges); a *ring of protection* (+1 to AC, +3 on saves); and a potion of *petrification* (one dose remaining).

The trick cane referred to above appears to be a burnished ebony walking stick topped with an ornate gold knob. To operate the cane, the user must do the following:

—Twist knob to the right and pull. This releases a dagger.

—Twist knob to the left and remove it. This reveals the chamber containing the magical scroll.

—Twist knob to the left and pull on the bottom of the cane. This exposes a bottom cup, a hinged compartment suitable for holding a ring (the compartment is currently empty).

Hallam was trained as a mage by the chief wizard of Tyr Anrad. Using his natural guile, Hallam quickly rose through the ranks of his fellow mages. While he has very few offensive spells, Hallam's spell list suits his nature and is therefore quite effective. He makes sure that he always has a way out of every situation. His *serpentine owl* guards him while he sleeps and is useful for scouting out *dimension door* escape points. The wizard keeps scrolls of spells that are useful in escape, as well as memorizing such defensive spells.

Hallam thinks much like the fox he resembles. He relentlessly pursues his goals without sparing time for spite or cruelty. However, he is vengeful and will attempt to pay back any perceived slight. He normally wears a medallion (an onyx raven with carnelian eyes, worth 720 gp) that distinguishes him as a wizard from the court of Tyr Anrad.

Hallam's Plans

Hallam has sent Merist, captain of the troops, and a unit of 10 men (see area 1 and "Forest Random Encounters" sidebar for statistics) to locate the NPC party and escort it to the ruins. The mage has used his supply of *magic mirror* spells to keep track of both Merist and the NPCs. Hallam uses his *dream* spell to maintain contact with Tyr Anrad and to issue orders to Merist.

When Hallam first entered the ruins, they served as the lair for a mated pair of mountain lions. He used his *charm monster* spell to gain the lions' trust, and they now act as his bodyguards. Hallam intends to leave the great cats here when the mission is over but watches them carefully until then, in case the *charm* spell wears off.

Mountain lions (2): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 17, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA rear claws for 1-4 hp damage each; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M; ML 9; XP 175; MC1 (Cats, Great).

If an unknown party approaches the ruins, one guard immediately leaves to awaken the off-duty guards at area 3, while the other guard reports to Hallam. The guards return to their posts and flank the party after the intruders walk through the gatehouse. Those guards who are not on duty use this time to armor themselves. Hallam casts a *friends* spell, then an *ESP* spell. He will parley with the party and scan their thoughts until he knows that his guards are armed.

The guards have orders to surround trespassers, but not at close distance nor in an overly hostile manner. If his *ESP* scan shows that his visitors are not related in any way to his mission, Hallam asks them to move on. If they do betray themselves or will not leave, Hallam uses a prearranged signal for the guards to attack with surprise. Two guards and an officer bar the door to the tower so that

Hallam can cast his spells in safety.

Hallam first casts a *hold person* spell on the intruders as the two mountain lions and the soldiers protect him. While the other guards fight, he uses his wand on party members, resorting to a *polymorph other* spell on particularly difficult adventurers. If the battle goes against Hallam (he loses half his hit points, six or more guards are down, or their morale breaks), he uses a *dimension door* spell to move 270 yards northeast to a clearing he has already scouted out. The round after he casts the *dimension door,* Hallam casts a *phantom steed* spell from his scroll and rides for Tyr Anrad.

If the PCs fail to come up with a plan to rescue the giant eagles' eggs, Hallam responds as follows to the NPCs' plan (see "NPC Party" sidebar). On the first round, Hallam deduces that the NPCs are an illusion, because his *ESP* cannot pick up any thoughts. He already knows from scrying that the ranger is badly wounded, not in perfect health as he appears. On the second round, Hallam scans for minds and discovers the thief sneaking away. In the next round, Hallam and his guards attempt to apprehend Kyra and will eventually succeed. However, Hallam will not kill her if he can help it, since she can serve him as a further bargaining tool.

Threatening Kyra's life causes Lurmien to capitulate and give Hallam the eggs in return for the statue and Kyra. Hallam orders a guard to take the eggs. Then he gathers his possessions (except the cart with the stone elf). After extracting an oath not to pursue revenge (to his mind, the NPCs did break their end of the contract by attacking), he releases Kyra as he and his retinue leave.

The timely intervention of the PCs can change this outcome. Hallam is very intelligent and will adapt his plan if needed. While a well-played PC party should certainly be able to stop him, it should be very unlikely for him to be caught or killed.

Concluding the Adventure

If Wuoldern the dwarf is with the PCs when they acquire the eggs, he guides them back through the forest to the eagles' aerie. If he is not present, the PC party must return to Jorand's Inn for Wuoldern to guide them. In either case, the DM can decide to play out all of the remaining encounters along the way, including wandering monsters, or simply let the party reach the aerie untroubled.

When the PCs reach the aerie, the eagles descend from their wheeling flight near the top of the mountain. Wuoldern introduces the PCs to the eagles, who eagerly request the return of their eggs. As they cannot carry the eggs themselves, the eagles ask the person holding the eggs if he will allow himself to be lifted in their talons. After the eggs are safely back in the nest, the female eagle remains to guard them while the male asks for the story of their recovery (relating it telepathically to his mate).

Afterward, the father eagle flies up to the nest and returns with the birds' two best treasures as a reward: a diamond and silver pendant (4,250 gp) and a gold tiara set with amethysts (2,000 gp). Both pieces date back to the dwarven kingdom, long since abandoned, that flourished in these mountains centuries ago. Any dwarven merchant will buy them at the given price, but a human merchant will offer 10% less because the items are sized for dwarves.

If the adventure was a success, the NPCs are grateful but still need to find a means of succoring their stony companion. Aldairenon can be restored by a successful *dispel magic* spell cast against 12th-level magic, and must then make a system shock roll (80% for Aldairenon). If the PCs choose to help their new friends, an adventure could be constructed around finding out this information.

If Hallam is slain, the party attracts the notice of his master, the warlord of Tyr Anrad, who might be moved to investigate Hallam's death. More likely, Hallam will escape to make himself a long-term adversary of the PCs without even leaving Tyr Anrad (by casting *nightmare* spells, *charming* monsters to hunt the PCs down, etc.).

Even if Hallam succeeds in obtaining the giant eagle eggs, he later finds (much to his chagrin) that while eagles can carry the assassins in their talons, the great birds cannot be ridden. This oversight causes Hallam to lose prestige in the eyes of his master. The wizard will blame his predicament on those who interfered (PCs, NPCs, or both).

If the PCs fail to recover the eggs, Wuoldern returns alone to inform the eagles of their loss, and the NPCs (if living) go off on their own to find a cure that will restore their compatriot.

Finally, Jorand's Inn has been detailed so that the DM can run other adventures (such as exploring the mountains) and use the inn as a base for the PCs in their adventures. The inn guard Caitlynn has been detailed so that she may be added to the PC party with little work if an NPC is desired. Ω

Continued from page 36

Bane (Abjuration)
Reversible
Level 7

Sphere: Protection
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent until dispelled
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Special

This spell bestows an exceptionally powerful curse on the target. The priest must touch the intended target within one turn of the spell's casting, or it expires. If he makes contact, the target gets a saving throw. If the saving throw succeeds, the victim receives a *major curse* (see *dying curse** above).

If the saving throw fails, the victim suffers the following effects: a −5 penalty to all attack and damage rolls, while opponents receive a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the victim; the victim fails all saving throws, and all attacks against him cause maximum damage.

The reverse of this spell, *reverse bane**, removes the effects of any curse except those with instantaneous effects, such as those of a cursed scroll. Ω

THE DRAVEN DEEPS' MENACE

BY JEFF FAIRBOURN

Set off the ultimate fireball!

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

Jeff writes: "I find that my best adventure ideas come from taking a slightly twisted but objective view of my own life, adding a measured bit of the impossible along with a good amount of traditional fantasy elements. My players are usually happy, confused, and awed all at once." We wonder which part of the following adventure parallels Jeff's real life.

"The Draven Deeps' Menace" is a DRAGONLANCE® adventure for the AD&D® game, set in and around the city of Palanthas, one generation after the War of the Lance. This adventure is designed for 5-7 good-aligned player characters of levels 3-6 (about 26 total levels). Much of the adventure takes place underwater, and the DM should be familiar with the AD&D rules for swimming, holding one's breath, and underwater combat (pages 120-122 of the *Player's Handbook* and page 79 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). While the PCs need not be equipped with means of breathing underwater, potions of *water breathing* and similar spells would be helpful.

In other settings, the city should be set in a fertile, temperate area near mountains, with a dry climate. Possible sites include Candlekeep in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, Greyhawk City or Gradsul in Keoland in the World of GREYHAWK® campaign, or any great center of learning, theology, and writing in the DM's campaign. To avoid introducing foreign creatures to these settings, aquatic elves can be substituted for Dimernesti, magic-using gargoyles for the draconians, primitive hill dwarves for the gully dwarves, merrow for the orughi, and bloodhawks for the skyfishers.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Palanthas stands as a center of civilization on Ansalon. Untouched by the Cataclysm, the city prospered while others endured hardship. In 357 AC, forces of the Dragon Highlord Kitiara attacked Palanthas. While parts of the city were destroyed, the Palanthians were victorious. They rebuilt the city, and prosperity returned. The aged Lord Amothus still lives, although his son, Jostin, has taken over all of his duties. The new Lord's Palace is built on the ruins of the old, as is the new Temple of Paladine. The Great Library has also been repaired, wherein Astinus the

Chronicler is ever recording Krynn's history. The Tower of High Sorcery still stands, stark against the white marble of the city.

The economy of Palanthas relies heavily on its port in the Bay of Branchala. At the mouth of the bay are the Gates of Paladine, large rocks that thrust out into the sea. They hold gnomish catapults capable of throwing flaming missiles over large distances. Thus, Palanthas's port is well protected from invasion and pirates.

Two months ago, a colony of koalinth (marine hobgoblins) settled in the Draven Deeps, an undersea cleft located about four miles northeast of the bay, and began waylaying ships traveling near the Gates. They attack lone and small vessels, which they loot and then burn to the waterline. People blame the losses on pirates, although no pirate ships have been seen. Some ships are now avoiding Palanthas, and the city is seeing hard times. A few purported witnesses have inflamed the dockside taverns with rumors of sea-monsters at the Gates. The Palanthians are upset, and Lord Jostin has asked the Wizards of High Sorcery for help.

Dalamar, Master of the Tower of High Sorcery in Palanthas, wishes to increase the number of black-robed wizards who are indebted to him, and so he has struck a bargain with Lord Jostin. In exchange for a solution to the shipping problem, Jostin has agreed (after much thought and worry) to build and open a school of black magic within the walls of the city.

With magical divination, Dalamar discovered the location of the koalinth colony. He learned that the crevice where the koalinth live is the continuation of a fault running through the Habbakuk Mountains. The fault was a result of the cataclysm that changed the face of Krynn. Northeast of Palanthas, where the fault reaches the seashore, there is a system of underground caves and pools. Dalamar believes that a sizeable thermal disturbance in the shoreline caves would create a shockwave that would destroy the koalinth colony farther out to sea. He made a magical device to create the shockwave and sent one of his apprentices with the device to Lord Jostin.

While Dalamar's work was successful, it was not very thorough. The shoreline caves that he designated as the site for the explosion are inhabited by a small tribe of Dimernesti sea-elves. Their home beneath the shore can be reached through the seaside caves, and would be annihilated if the device were detonated there.

Lord Jostin wants to hire someone to deposit the device deep inside the seaside caves northeast of Palanthas and detonate it. He has scheduled a public announcement in the Central Plaza, hoping someone will volunteer to help the city. Of course, the Dimernesti have done their best to keep their home a secret from the humans living close by, so Jostin is unaware that the success of this mission may result in the elves' tragic deaths.

Adventure Background

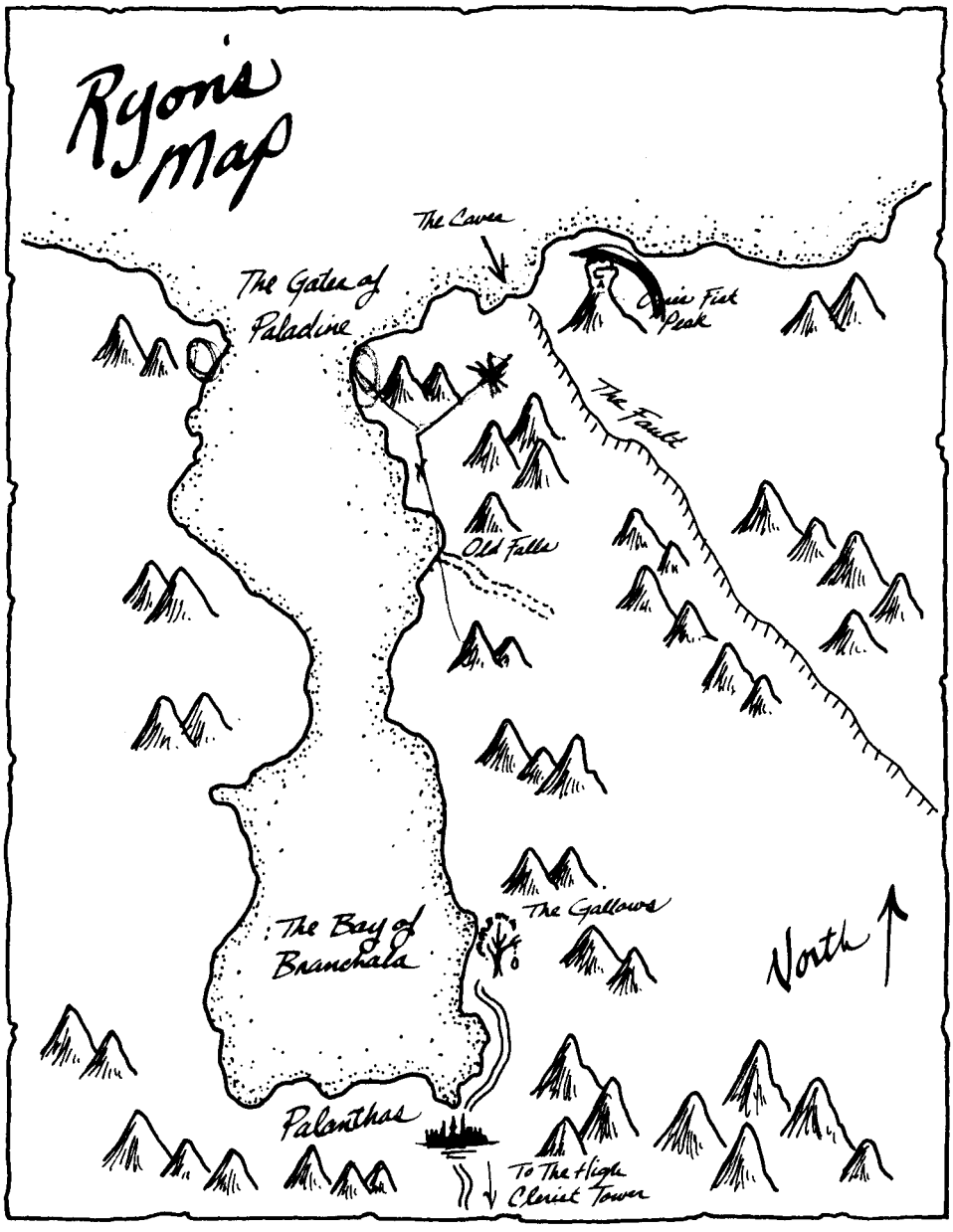
The PCs may be in Palanthas as part of their duties as Knights of Solamnia, as white- or red-robed wizards, or simply to make use of Palanthas' libraries and sages to unravel a map or clue from a previous adventure. Read the following aloud to the players:

> Palanthas is a beautiful city of white marble buildings and straight, paved streets. The people have worked hard to cover up the marks of the battle that raged here years ago. It's a nice place to live, and the peoples' lives are good.
>
> Lately, however, you have noticed that the people seem edgy and worried. Listening in the dockside taverns, you have often heard rumors of failing food supplies and pirates. Several ships bearing important supplies from Ergoth have turned back due to the danger. The docks are unusually quiet, and the workers there are fearful.
>
> This evening, the lord of Palanthas will make an announcement about the difficulties. Do you want to attend?

If the PC don't go, the adventure ends here. If they want to hear what the lord has to say, continue with the following:

> The Central Plaza is full of throngs of people being jostled from all sides, hoping that the lord's news will be important.
>
> Everyone settles down as Lord Jostin appears at one of the windows of the palace. He speaks in a weary tone. "People of Palanthas, I welcome and thank you for attending this important gathering. First, let me tell you that my father is well but very tired, as am I. We have worried much about our fair city. Many of you have heard rumors of pirates in our bay. Let me assure you these rumors are false. The guards at the Gates of Paladine ensure that all is well with the gnomish defenses there. Yet, many ships turn away from us, claiming the danger here is great.
>
> "We have investigated the problem and have discovered that a group of sea creatures is responsible for our shipping problem. There is no need for fear, however, for the creatures are few and easily taken care of. We who stood so bravely against the might of the Dragonarmies have nothing to fear from them!" He laughs, and though you can tell it is done with effort, it seems to curb the excitement in the throng.
>
> "To rid us of this small problem, we need a few brave people to perform a service in the name of our city. The task is simple and will result in the creatures' expulsion. The volunteers will be rewarded, and will always have the city's gratitude. If there are any among you who wish to volunteer, please come to my hall in one hour.
>
> "Now, good people, I suggest you return to your homes and to your duties. We shan't let anything as paltry as this upset our lives. Thank you for your attention."
>
> Lord Jostin bows and withdraws into his palace as the crowd begins to disperse in a muffled torrent of conversation.

The PCs can ignore the call for help without embarrassment. If they go to the palace that evening, two guards greet them at the front doors. The guards ask for the PCs' names and pass the information on to Jostin. A tall, straight-shouldered butler named Rufus arrives to conduct the PCs through an entryway into a small inner chamber without windows. The room holds a small table just large enough for all of the PCs to be seated. Rufus waits until they are all seated, then leaves, quietly closing the door. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:



After a short wait, the door opens again, admitting the butler and an aging man dressed in the light-blue robes of a cleric of Mishakal, goddess of healing. The man bows to your group and nods to the butler, who leaves the room again.

"Greetings," speaks the man. "I am Tamish Eldwyse, Revered Son of Paladine and servant to the lord of Palanthas. Lord Jostin appreciates your response to his summons and hopes you will prove capable of performing his task. You must understand that we are not in a position to trust all who would respond to such a call, and so we must subject you to a test to determine your honesty and integrity. If you pass, all will be explained thereafter. Now, if you'll permit me, I have a few questions."

Tamish remains standing while he interrogates the PCs. It is his duty to root out the incapable, dishonest, power-seeking, or evil among those who respond to Lord Jostin's call. He has already dismissed several groups of would-be heroes. He uses his *know alignment* and *detect lie* spells while questioning the PCs about their recent exploits to make sure their intentions are good.

If the PCs pass Tamish's test, he thanks them and instructs them to wait while he consults with Lord Jostin. Moments later, Rufus reenters and conducts the PCs into a large, well-decorated room containing a polished table and several chairs. A fire burns in the hearth, and the room is comfortably warm. Lord Jostin gets up from his seat at the table as the PCs enter. At his side is Tamish Eldwyse.

Lord Jostin appears satisfied, greeting and thanking you for your desire to help. He is tall and thin, with light brown hair, a neatly trimmed moustache, and sharp eyes. After introductions are made, he motions you to sit and joins you at the table.

"Friends," he says "Tamish tells me I can trust you, so I will. The things we say in this room are secret, matters of state. They must not leave this room, for there are some who would take advantage of this situation to bring harm to Palanthas. What you heard in the plaza today was only a part of the truth. I'm afraid that if I told the people all of the truth, it would only make matters worse.

According to what the Master of the Tower said, there are many koalinth—sea-dwelling hobgoblins—at the Gates, and it looks like they plan on staying there for a while. We have the potential for a large problem. You see, Palanthas has been a secure, safe port for a long time. If these creatures are not eliminated, traders and shippers will seek other, safer ports. Not many overland traders will bring their goods through the mountains—certainly not enough to make up for our shipping loss.

In two weeks, the *Water Fox,* a ship bearing food, cloth, and other goods, is due to arrive from Kalaman. I believe the peoples of the east are watching to see if the *Water Fox* arrives safely, and they will quit shipping their trade goods to us if she doesn't. If they quit their trading by sea—well, I think it will start getting rough in our city if things

don't change, and soon. The koalinth must be forced to leave, or they must be destroyed. That brings us to why I have summoned you." He speaks to the butler, "Rufus, show the wizard in."

As the butler leaves, Lord Jostin questions the PCs about their recent exploits, inquiring specifically about any events they related to Tamish previously. He asks them if they have ever faced koalinth before, and he will want the details of any such encounters. The PCs are free to make suggestions. Jostin listens to them thoughtfully, but he will continue in his current course unless a markedly better plan is proposed. If the PCs mention the Knights of Solamnia, Jostin says the following:

"Ah, the knights. Honorable and valiant as they are, they don't appreciate the value of stealth and subtlety in a situation like this. They are pressing me to permit a battle against the creatures! I don't see how they could even reach them, and I think it would only attract unwanted attention to the problem. But, the knights have connections, and I may have to give in just to keep their loyalty."

After a moment, Rufus reenters, followed by a man wearing the red robes of a Wizard of High Sorcery. The wizard bows to Lord Jostin and smiles wryly at Tamish. Jostin introduces him as Ryon Limblade, apprentice to the Master of the Tower, and motions for him to sit. He then allows the PCs to introduce themselves. Ryon appears to be in his late 20s, with a thin face and short-trimmed moustache. He listens to the PCs with stiff politeness. When the PCs are finished, Jostin tells them that Ryon will explain the task.

The red-robed wizard speaks in a quick, clear voice. "My master's work has yielded the following conclusions: One, a colony of hundreds of koalinth has moved into the undersea region north of the Gates of Paladine. Two, the koalinth inhabit an underwater crevice, a place called the Draven Deeps, which is the continuation of a fault through the Habakkuk Mountains. Three, the crevice is unstable and is the site of great earthquakes. A powerful, hot, and carefully placed explosion would cause quakes and steam fissures to erupt in the crevice where the koalinth live. A series of caves on the north coast, east of the Gates, is a suitable spot for the explosion.

"We cannot guarantee the creatures will leave, nor that if they leave, they will not move closer to Palanthas. We can guarantee the deaths of many of them, which will likely end the threat."

At this point, Ryon pulls an object wrapped in black linen from his robes. He unfolds the cloth, revealing a thick brass cylinder. It is 2' long and 4" thick, covered with runes and engravings. "This item will produce the desired explosion," he explains. The wizard smiles and casually tosses the cylinder to a random PC. Jostin, Tamish, and Rufus all gasp and start. The PC must make a successful attack roll vs. AC 4 to catch the device. If the PC fails, the cylinder lands on the stone floor with a loud thud, but does not explode. Ryon then continues, saying, ". . . but only when this brass key is broken." He holds out a 2"-long miniature of the device so that everyone can see it, then hands it to Lord Jostin.

Next, the wizard pulls a scroll case from his robes. He removes a map from the case and spreads it across the table. "This map," he explains, "shows Palanthas, here, and the surrounding area. This fault, created during the Cataclysm, continues out beyond the coast into the sea. Where the fault reaches the coast, you will find an entrance to the caves. We have included several landmarks on this map to aid you in finding the entrance.

"From what I have seen, you can find the entrance in the morning shadow of the Ogre's Fist. You must plant the device as deeply into the caves as you are able. Due to the ebb and flow of the tides, the caves are regularly filled and drained of sea water, so you will have little time to place the device with a reasonable amount of safety.

"The caves are a point of stability on the fault, yet are near enough to the crevice to disturb it. Detonating the device on the surface will have little or no effect. When you do break the key, you should be at least one mile away from the fault to be safe. My master does not anticipate any major damage will be done anywhere except in the crevice.

"We have acted in haste at the lords' request, and will not be responsible should something go wrong. My master has insured that the device can neither be detonated anywhere near our tower, nor therefore in the city. Are there any questions?"

The PCs are free to ask any questions; Ryon answers them all as best he can in the same terse voice. He knows everything about the situation that Dalamar knows; formulate his answers accordingly. When there are no further questions, the wizard says:

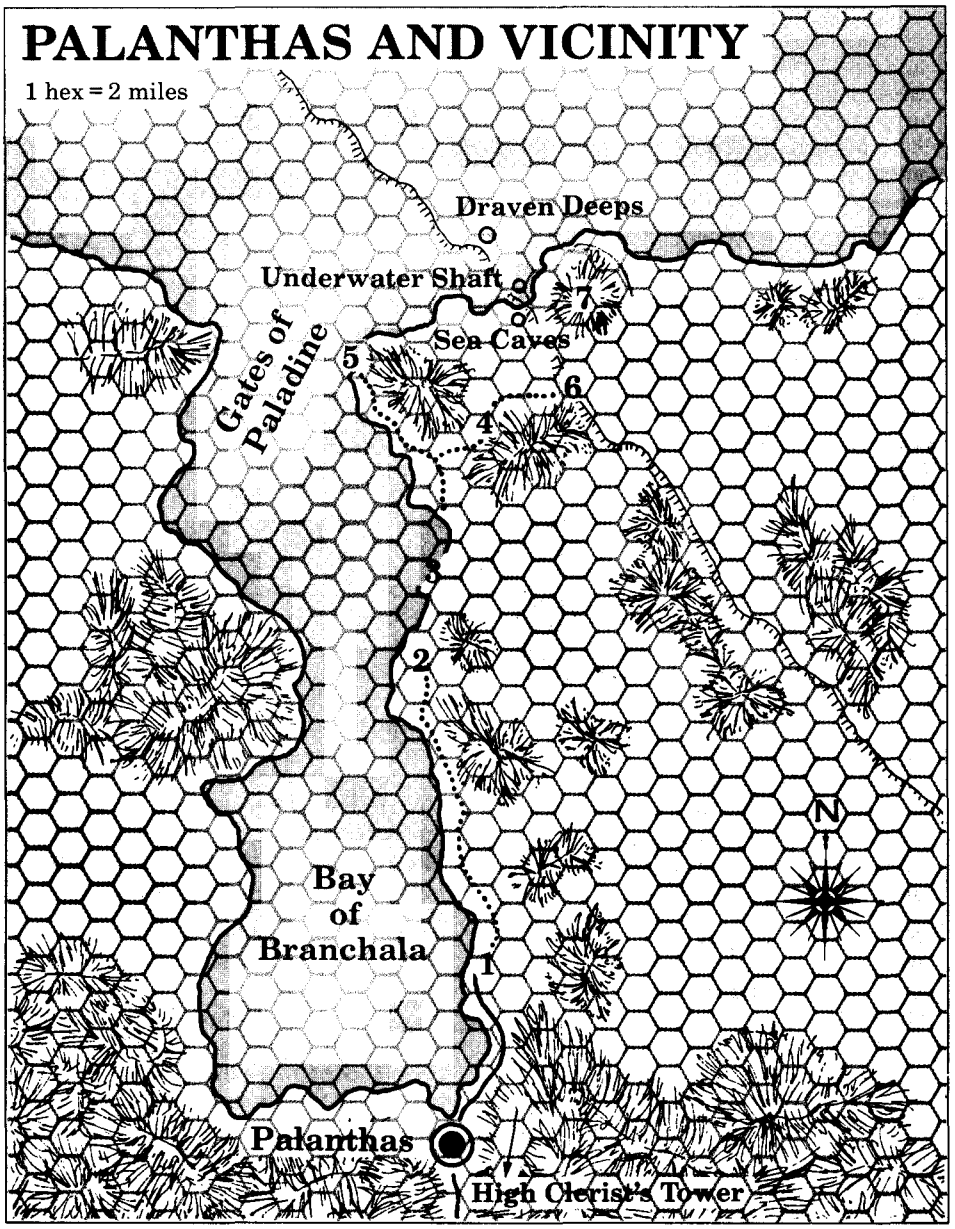
"Now, I must return to the tower. Lord Jostin, I believe my master will contact you in his own time about your part in the agreement. I also believe you would do well not to forget what you have promised."

With that, Ryon is *teleported* back to the Tower of High Sorcery (Dalamar's doing) just as Jostin is about to respond. The lord of Palanthas appears nonplussed for a moment, then cautions the PCs against speaking of the nature of their quest with anyone. He tells them that Tamish and his staff have worked hard and have eliminated any spies from the palace grounds, but he assures them there will be many outside.

If asked about the reward, Jostin lifts a bag from the floor and places it on the table. He tips the bag slightly, spilling several gold and steel coins onto the table. Inside the bag are 90 steel pieces and 100 gp for each PC. Jostin explains that each party member will receive an additional 100 steel pieces upon completion of the mission.

If the PCs ask Jostin what he promised in exchange for Dalamar's aid, the lord grows pale and responds, "I may have paid a high price for the master's aid, but that is my own affair." Any further questions regarding the subject cause the lord of Palanthas to growl and change the subject.

When there is nothing else to be said, Jostin stands and thanks the PCs once again. He wishes them good luck on their mission, urging them once again



to secrecy and quick travel. As the PCs leave, Jostin gives them the brass key and the device, entrusting the objects to a cleric, mage, or knight (in that order). He will not give them to a kender.

Give the players "Ryon's Map." If they are new arrivals in the area, the PCs may want to speak with some townspeople about the landmarks. The DM could also stage city encounters (such as starving beggars; doom-criers; or small throngs of worried, riotous people) to emphasize that Palanthas is truly in need. If the DM wants to give the PCs some rumors, use the information given in the specific encounter areas.

Unfortunately, Lord Jostin's assumption that his household is free of spies is not correct. Rufus was recently approached by a man named Groach, a member of a faction in Palanthas that opposes Jostin's rule. The faction members argue that while Lord Amothus is alive, he should retain full responsibility for governing the city.

This group wants Lord Amothus in power because they know he would be a much weaker ruler than his son—he is quite fickle and easily manipulated. The faction's efforts are fueled and secretly led by a group of bandits and draconians operating in the hills and mountains around Palanthas. They seek to weaken the city's rule and make banditry and lawlessness easier. Rufus is unaware that the faction is led by bandits. He is merely a loyal retainer who is trying to restore the dignity that he believes Jostin has stolen from the aged Amothus.

After the PCs meet with Lord Jostin, Rufus contacts Groach (unless the PCs somehow learn about the butler's connections and stop him). The bandits will ambush the PCs en route to the caves (see area 1). If Rufus is discovered, he reveals that his loyalties lie with Jostin's father, who is "locked away from his people like a diseased animal." If he is found out, Rufus will be quite open about his association with the rebel faction, for he is not ashamed of his loyalty to the city's senile ruler.

Rufus's meeting with Groach occurs one hour after the PCs leave Jostin's palace. In an alley behind the Temple of Paladine, Groach milks Rufus for information regarding Dalamar's device. He passes the information on to the bandits (area 4) by carrier pigeon (kept in his home in the waterfront district). Groach is a wrinkled, twisted old man who complains of loneliness and the ugliness of life. He is very sneaky and manipulative. If Rufus and Groach are surprised during their meeting, Rufus will reprimand the PCs and criticize Lord Jostin for not treating his father with respect. Groach dons his *cloak of elvenkind* and tries to sneak away. If he can't escape, Groach will play it safe and innocent, joining Rufus in his mild, self-righteous rebukes.

In Groach's home, beneath his pigeon cages, a secret compartment contains scraps of paper with messages from the bandits and a ledger containing the names of prominent members of the faction opposing Jostin, with the addresses of their meeting places.

Lord Jostin of Palanthas: AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; F4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 11, C 12, I 13, W 14, Ch 14; ML 14; chain mail, shield, *long sword +1*, dagger.

Tamish Eldwyse: AL LG; AC 4; MV 12; C8; hp 37; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 7, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 13; ML 15; *chain mail +1, medallion of faith, flail +2*. Spells: *cure light wounds, command, detect evil, detect poison, light; augury, hold person,*

know alignment (×2, both used), *slow poison; continual light, cure disease, dispel magic, speak with dead; detect lie* (×3, all used).

Ryon Limblade: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; M5 (red-robed wizard); hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 15, C 9, I 17, W 11, Ch 11; ML 12; *ring of protection +2*, potions of *clairaudience* and *speed*, dagger. Spells: *affect normal fires, armor, audible glamer, light; improved phantasmal force, web; wind wall.*

Rufus: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 15; dagger.

Groach: AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; T5; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 16, C 8, I 15, W 13, Ch 9; ML 12; XP 420; *short sword +2, cloak of elvenkind.*

A Stroll to the Sea

The land north of Palanthas is rough and rocky. The land within four miles of the coast has scattered trees and brush, and the air is cool and humid. The road to the gallows (area 1) meanders around cliffs and large boulders. Small trees among the rocks offer many hiding places within a few feet of the road. Palanthian guards and knights patrol the area. The PCs will not see any ships on the Bay of Branchala during their journey.

The land becomes drier and more level to the northeast. Craggy mountains and rock formations give the area a forbidding appearance. Check for random encounters every 12 hours. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1 on 1d6 (see "Overland Random Encounters" sidebar). All of the landmarks are visible from any adjacent hex.

1. The Gallows. If the PCs prevented Rufus from delivering his report to Groach (see "Adventure Background"), the bandits will not have prepared their ambush here. No one will be "hanging" on the tree, and none of the bandits will be present.

> The road broadens ahead and becomes a clearing, with a large tree growing in the center. The tree appears to have been struck by lightning. It is split down the middle, with one side dead and shriveled, and the other alive and full. From the thick, living branches hang some old, frayed ropes. Two of the ropes form nooses around the necks of bloated draconians. The bodies sway gently in the breeze, hanging about 4' above the ground.

This is a trap. The Palanthians have not used the gallows for a long time, letting the rope nooses rot away. The two bozak draconians are alive and conscious, using their *levitate* powers to hang safely above the ground, and the nooses around their necks are loose. Two bandits with heavy crossbows hide in the foliage of the tree under cover of the bozaks' *invisibility* spells. They remain silent until the ambush is sprung. Behind the rocks that ring the clearing hide six more bandits armed with short swords and shields.

When the PCs are within 10' of the draconians, the six bandits charge from behind the rocks, yelling and hooting to draw the PCs' attention away from the draconians. As the party turns to face the charge, the bozaks slip free of the nooses and silently drop to the ground. They cast *burning hands* spells at the PCs' rear ranks, possibly with a −3 penalty to the PCs' surprise roll. Then they melee with the PCs.

The bandits in the tree remain *invisible*, trying to discern who has possession of Dalamar's device. If they are unable to tell who has it, they will attack any PC wizard who tries to cast a spell, firing their crossbows to disrupt the spell-casting. Once the *invisibility* is lost, they continue firing from the tree until the PCs are dead. If the draconians are killed, the remaining bandits run. Any bandits who flee this area will join those in area 4.

Bozak draconians (2): INT high; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, run 15, glide 18, fly 6 (E); HD 4; hp 18, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA spells; SD +2 bonus to saves; MR 20%; SZ M (6' + tall); ML 13; XP 1,400; MC4 (Draconian, bozak). Spells: *burning hands* (used), *magic missile, shocking grasp; invisibility* (used), *levitate* (used).

Bandits (8): AL CE; AC 8; MV 10; 0-level; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; MC1 (Men); leather armor, swords (50%), crossbows (50%).

Overland Random Encounters (Roll 1d10)

1: **Mountain Lion**: INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA rear claws for 1-4 hp each; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M; ML 8; XP 175; MC1 (Cats, great).

This predator stalks the party from a distance to determine if there is any easy prey in the group. If left alone, it leaves after an hour of watching.

2: **Skyfisher** (1-6): INT high; AL N; AC 3; MV 3, fly 24 (C); HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 3-11 or 1-6/1-6; SA dive/drop; SZ S; ML 9; XP 270; MC4 (Avian).

These dangerous birds swoop down and harass the party. If the PCs show any sign of weakness, the birds attack. If two or more are killed, the rest will flee.

3: **Giant vultures** (1-6): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 3, fly 24 (D); HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 8; XP 120; MC3.

These scavengers follow the PCs, hoping for a meal should the party encounter other creatures.

4: **Wemics** (2): INT average; AL N; AC 6, 7; MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 29, 27; THAC0 15; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4 and by weapon type; SD −2 initiative bonus; SZ L; ML 12; XP 270; MC3; club, three javelins.

This pair is searching for their two missing cubs (see area 4). They confront the PCs and forcefully ask if they have seen the cubs. If attacked, the wemics fight ferociously. Otherwise, they gruffly thank the PCs and leave.

5: **Gully dwarves** (12): INT average; AL CN; AC 10; MV 6; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4 (fist/bite) or by weapon type; SD grovel; SZ S; ML 7; MC4 (Dwarf, gully).

This group was recently kicked out of its home by the bandits in area 4. They are resentful and may attack the party for the heck of it. When the PCs fight back, the gully dwarves grovel or flee. If the PCs speak with them, they may learn about the bandits' lair in area 4.

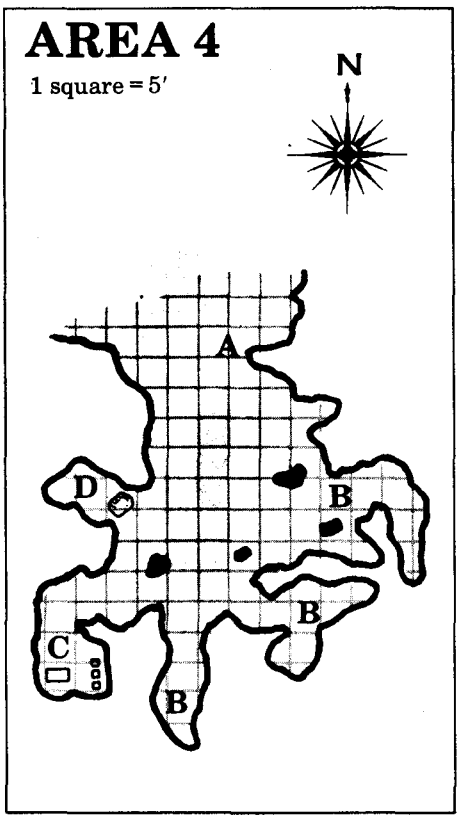
6: **Dire wolves** (3): INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L; ML 10; XP 175; MC1 (Wolf).

These beasts are hungry and have caught the scent of the PCs. They howl and jump to the attack.

7: **Bandits** (6): AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; XP 15; MC1 (Men); leather armor, short swords.

These miscreants are on an errand from area 4. If the PCs are surprised by this encounter, the bandits try to ambush them on the trail. The bandits flee if the battle goes against them.

8-10: **No Encounter.**



2. The Old Falls.

> Rising above the trail is a steep rock with a depression in its center. It looks like water once tumbled down the rock face, for a dry river bed continues out from its base to wind down to the shore of the Bay of Branchala. Looking north, you can see the Gates of Paladine and the sea beyond.

This area is safe. If the PCs make camp here, they will have no random encounters during the night.

3. The Shipwreck. From any surrounding hex, the PCs can see a large object lying on the shore of the bay. If the PCs investigate, read the following:

> An odd structure on the shore takes shape as you get closer. You realize it is a ship! Or rather, it was a ship. Now all that remains is its blackened hull, figurehead, and forecastle. The deck and rear parts of the ship are totally burned away, and it seems a miracle that the ship remained afloat long enough to drift to the bank. You notice many flies buzzing above the ruins, and the strong smells of death and decaying fish.

The *Sea Lion*, a Palanthian fishing vessel, was returning to the city when the koalinth attacked. If the PCs crawl inside the wreck, they discover a scattered mass of dead fish. Inside the ruins of the forecastle are two bodies. The first is the fast-decaying body of a koalinth, run through the middle with a *spear +1*. The spear is intact, though it smells terrible. The second body is that of Ramman, the sailor who owned the spear. A fire on the deck trapped him inside with the dead koalinth, and he died when the forecastle collapsed on him. If the PCs return the spear and a description of the vessel to Palanthian authorities, Ramman's survivors will give them 145 steel pieces.

4. Bandits' Cave. If the PCs approach this area stealthily or *invisibly*, the bandits' ambush will not be prepared. Modify the boxed text accordingly.

> The trail leads to a 20'-wide opening that descends into the hillside. It appears to have provided shelter recently for a good-sized group of creatures. Footprints litter the entrance, and two campfires are buried with dirt and sand. Except for the unpleasant odor of gully dwarf, and the many small side tunnels branching off deeper into the ground, the cave seems quite hospitable.

If the bandits are prepared, they hide in the small side tunnels of the cave, while the bozak leader stands *invisible* just outside the cave mouth (area A). The draconian waits until the PCs set up camp or prepare to investigate the side tunnels, then casts a *magic missile* spell at any wizards, and a *burning hands* spell at any clerics. The other bandits, including three baaz draconians and five humans, emerge from the side tunnels (area B) one round after their leader attacks, and will try to separate the PCs. If the bandits appear to be losing the fight, the bozak *levitates* and use its wings to fly away, while the others also try to escape, taking their treasure with them. Each holds 10-30 sp, and 2-8 steel pieces. The humans are armed with long swords and shields. The draconians attack with their claws.

One of the small side caves (area C) holds a small guano-covered desk, a set of cages, and several sacks of bird meal. The cages hold three carrier pigeons used by Groach to communicate with the bandits (see "Adventure Background"). One of the human bandits is a proficient pigeon-handler who writes and receives messages. The crude desk's single drawer is unlocked and contains a sheaf of paper, an ink well, a quill, and several messages received from Groach, including one that describes the PCs and their mission (unless the PCs managed to stop Rufus from passing on this information).

Another of the small side caves (area D) is blocked by a large stone that walls in two small wemic cubs. The lionlike centaurs are weak from starvation and thirst, and are too young to aid the PCs in any way. The bandits captured them, hoping to train them to be guards and steeds. The cubs are too intelligent and free spirited, however, and refused the bandits' "training methods." They were locked up without food and water as punishment. If the PCs should rescue the cubs and care for them, the lion-centaurs will be very grateful. The DM could allow the PCs to help the cubs find their parents, staging an encounter with the adult wemics in the future (see "Overland Random Encounters"). If the PC harm the cubs in any way, they may have to deal with their parents.

Bozak draconian: hp 25; see area 1 for complete statistics.

Baaz draconians (3): INT average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, run 15, glide 18; HD 2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; MR 20%; SZ M (5 ½' tall); ML 13; XP 175; MC4 (Draconian, baaz).

Bandits (5): hp 5 each; see area 1 for complete statistics.

Wemic cubs (2): INT average; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+4; hp 12, 11; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1/1; SZ S; ML 8; MC3 (modified).

5. Gnome Catapult Station. A rough stone path, girded by an iron railing and the cliffside, leads to the high stone wall and gate that surround this area. The gate is blocked by an iron portcullis. Beyond the wall, gnomish catapults guard the Gates of Paladine. The fortress is accessible only through the gate or by making the hazardous climb over the summit.

The portcullis is guarded by four Knights of Solamnia. They open the

gate for no one but may converse momentarily with the PCs through it. They have heard of bandits in the area but know no details. If a person approaches the gate in desperate need, the knights summon a resident cleric of Paladine to perform whatever aid is necessary.

Over 400 knights of various levels and orders man the fortress ramparts—more than enough to repel a land attack. The catapults can launch projectiles accurately over four miles. The projectiles burst into flame on impact for 4d6 hp damage.

Knights of Solamnia (4): AL LG; AC 4; MV 9; Knight6; hp 45 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 16; MC4 (Man of Krynn); chain mail, shield, long sword, heavy crossbow.

Cleric of Paladine: AL LG; AC 4; MV 9; C5; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; ML 17; banded mail, mace, spells chosen by DM.

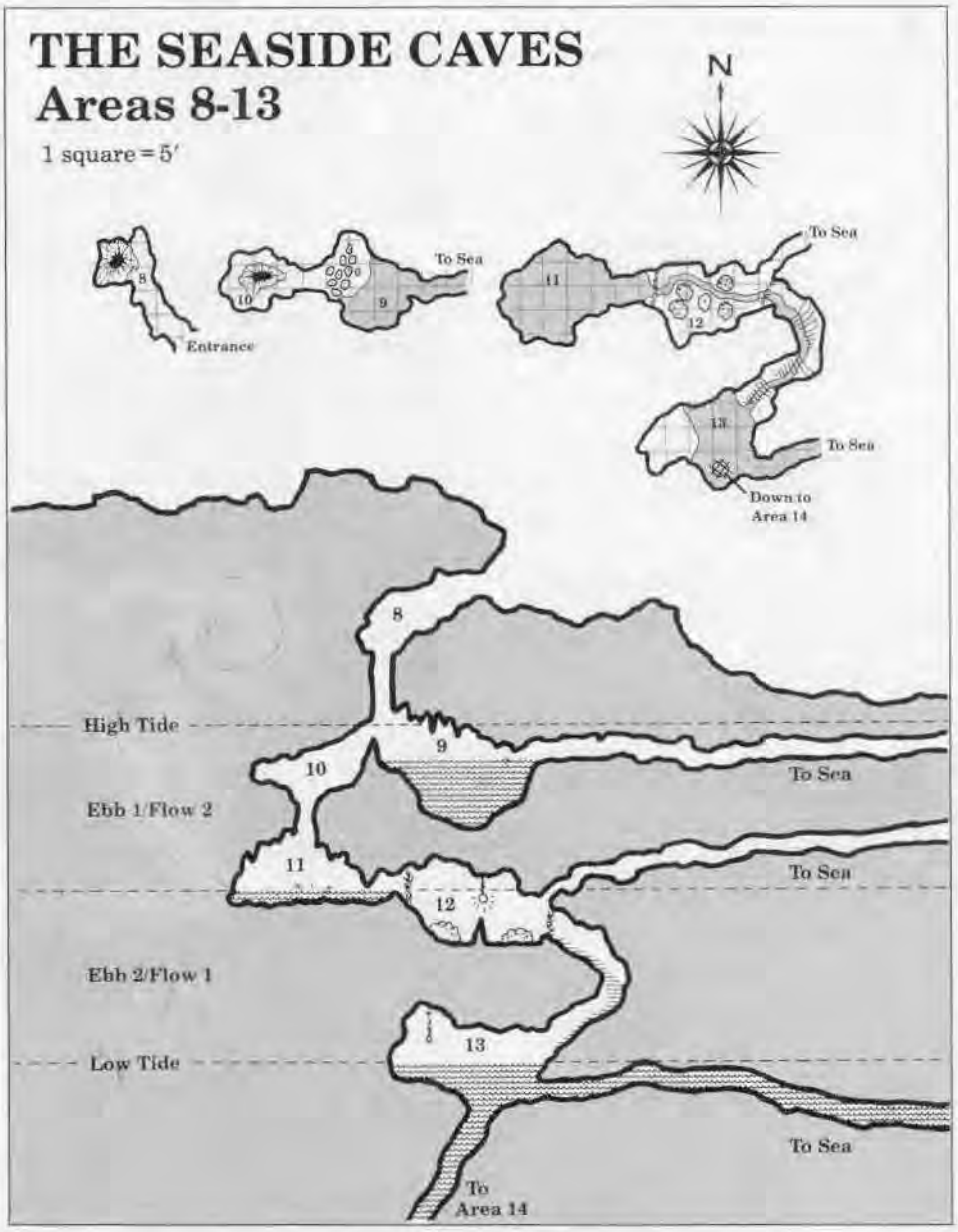
6. The Fault.

> It appears that, long ago, a massive earthquake caused the northeastern lands to rise and the western ground to buckle and sink. The result is a crumbling cliff face over 80′ tall in some areas. Scattered along the cliff face are several dark openings—caves and hollows that appear to wind into the rock to varying depths. Heaps of debris that has fallen from the wall lie at the base of the cliff. The fault extends as far as you can see in both directions.

Loose rocks and gravel make climbing the cliff dangerous. Thieves have a −15% modifier to their climb-walls ability. Others cannot climb higher than 10′ before falling (1-6 hp damage) unless they are roped and anchored to the top.

The caves and hollows range from 5′-50′ deep and are 2′-8′ wide. The caves frequently serve as lairs for the animals of the region. While the PCs are here, the chance of a random encounter increases to 1 in 4 (checked twice each 24-hour period). If the PCs plant and detonate Dalamar's device in one of the deeper caves of this region, the explosion shakes the length of the entire fault (see "Detonating Dalamar's Device").

The fault can be easily and quickly followed northwest to the coast.



7. The Ogre's Fist. This is the highest peak in the region, visible from 10 hexes off in any direction.

> Before you, a monolith of stone reaches up to the sky. Its craggy summit looks like a giant clenched fist defying the heavens. The smooth, treeless slope of the mountain extends to the rocky beach below.

Ogre's Fist Peak stands over 2,000′ above sea level and is used as a landmark by passing ships. Only short grass grows on it, and climbing higher than 1,000′ is difficult, for the slopes become sheer and the rocks slippery.

The Seaside Caves

These caves are hidden in a rocky section of the north coast, due west of Ogre's Fist Peak. While the PCs look for the entrance to the caves (1-4 hours), make one random encounter check. If the PCs rescued the wemic cubs from the bandits (area 4), stage an encounter with the cubs' parents here (see "Overland Random Encounters" sidebar). Several other tunnels leading into the

caves may be accessible when the tide is going out, but none of these tunnels has a diameter larger than 2'.

There are three high tides and three low tides each day. The schedule of the tides is not always constant, however, because of Krynn's three moons. PCs with proficiencies or secondary skills in sailing, navigation, or seamanship know the approximate schedule of the tides and can tell whether the tide is currently coming in or going out. When the PCs arrive at the caves, roll 1d8 and consult the following chart:

1 High Tide
2 Ebb-1
3 Ebb-2
4 Low Tide
5 Flow-1
6 Flow-2

The tide cycles through its phases (high tide to high tide) every eight hours, plus or minus 1 hour. Keep track of the tide while the PCs are in the caves, noting its effects under each cave's description.

8. Cave Mouth. The rocks around the cave mouth are the home of small, harmless, colorful crabs. They constantly move back and forth across the rocks and sand of the beach, scampering out of the PCs' way. The cave opening twists backward and down at an uncomfortable angle. The inner stone is slick from the ocean's spray, forcing each descending PC to make a Dexterity check or fall (1-3 hp damage).

When the PCs find the cave entrance, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You find a jagged opening that descends into the dark rocks. It is 10' high and roughly circular, apparently formed by the buckling and shifting of the rock masses around you. The roaring of the sea water is echoed from within, and the air inside is cool.

The PCs can hear running water at the back of the chamber, where the floor suddenly drops into a 12'-wide hole. Anyone holding a light source above the hole and looking down will see the light reflected 15' below. Descending into the hole without a rope or other means of support is impossible because of the slick rock. PCs falling through the hole into area 9 take 2-12 hp damage and suffer an attack from the giant crab that lives there. PCs inspecting the sides of the hole will notice many scratches in the smooth stone (made by the giant crab).

This chamber is above the high-water line and is unaffected by the ebb and flow of the tides.

9. Crab Cavern. The ceiling of this cavern is about 10' below the hole in area 8. The floor is made up of loose, jagged rocks and a pool of water ranging from 3'-9' deep. A giant crab hides submerged in the deepest part of the pool. It exits regularly (either through the water entrance or up the hole to area 8) to feed on its smaller cousins. The crab instantly attacks anyone descending into this cave.

Opposite the pool, the cave constricts and descends at an easy angle to area 10, where the crab cannot follow. Movement in this cavern is dangerous (use the falling rule given in area 8). During flow-2 and high tide, the water level in this cavern rises and spills over into area 10.

Giant crab: INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 3; hp 21; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD −3 to surprise; SZ L; ML 13; XP 65; MC1 (Crustacean, giant).

10. Slick Cavern. This small chamber collects runoff water from area 9. During flow-2 and high tide, water runs down into this cave and falls through a 5'-diameter hole into area 11 below. The constant flow of water makes the floor slick (as in area 8).

The cavern's ceiling is low and dripping with stalactites, forcing all those taller than a dwarf to stoop when fighting in this room. Tall PCs who fail Dexterity checks (with a −2 penalty) bump their heads for 1-2 hp damage.

During flow-2, high tide, and ebb-1, the chamber below (area 11) fills with water. The water level climbs up to the hole in the floor of this cave, making it look like a deep pool. Anyone looking into the pool has a 50% chance to notice an eerie light in the water's depths. When the water level is down, the light is not visible.

11. Salt Cavern. The smell of salt is strong here, as this cave is regularly filled with and drained of water. The floor is covered with a layer of sediment and is always submerged in at least 2' of water. Light shows salt deposits lining the walls of the cave, and many crystals sparkling beneath the water.

During ebb-2 and low tide, a strange light is reflected through the water. If any PC searches for the light's source and passes an Intelligence check, he finds it comes from the east side of the cave. At this end, the ceiling dips beneath the water level and then rises into area 12. The strange light shines through the water under the ceiling from area 12. It's easy to plunge under the low ceiling and swim through to area 12, although the PCs cannot feel air on the other side by reaching underneath the rocks.

12. Dimernesti Greetings. Beyond the entrance, the floor of this cave drops to 7' below that of area 11.

Recently, a tribe of Dimernesti sea elves moved into these caves. They have made the lower caves an adequate home with kelp "dams." They placed a stiff, woven partition of kelp near the entrance from area 11 to keep out any intruders. The wall is sturdy, though only an inch thick. The PCs must do at least 12 hp cutting damage to pass. Although the crab in area 9 could cut the kelp easily with its claws, it is too large to pass through areas 10 and 11.

The tribes' wizard and priest have placed protective spells on the woven kelp wall to ward off intruders. Cutting the wall triggers a *programmed illusion,* and the image of a golden dragon rears up in the cave beyond the partition. Upon the dragon's back is a rider in shining white armor, bearing a dragonlance. The rider booms out in a loud voice, "You, who now defile this holy shrine, leave at once!" If the PCs do not retreat immediately, the dragon-image breathes flame, even if the cave is underwater! When the dragon breathes, it triggers a *glyph of warding* inscribed on the kelp wall, meant to reinforce the dragon-image's flame breath. The *glyph* super-heats the water, and anyone within 10' of the kelp wall takes 6d4 hp damage (save vs. spells for half damage). Although the dragon continues to breathe fire at intruders, no more real damage occurs once the *glyph* is spent.

The white rider continues shouting insults as the dragon fights, saying things like, "Evil fiends, I warned you!" The noise alerts the elves in area 13, who will be prepared if the PCs make it past the illusion. As long as anyone is

still conscious and in range of the illusion, it continues fighting and yelling.

The room is always lit softly by a lantern hanging from the ceiling. The lantern is made of a glowing blue brain coral and hangs by a chain of braided seaweed. In the center of the cave, a large cluster of blue coral forms a rough table. The room appears to be decorated with exotic undersea flora and fauna, including green and white coral, a large patch of leafy brown algae, clusters of red algae, and four pink-tinged sponges.

The elves have collected these things from other parts of the sea and now use their special talents to keep them growing in the absence of sunlight and in the intermittent exposure to the air. The lantern provides enough light for the plants to thrive. The sponges serve as chairs for any guests the elves might entertain and also keep their users comfortably wet. The sponges become slightly sticky when exposed to air.

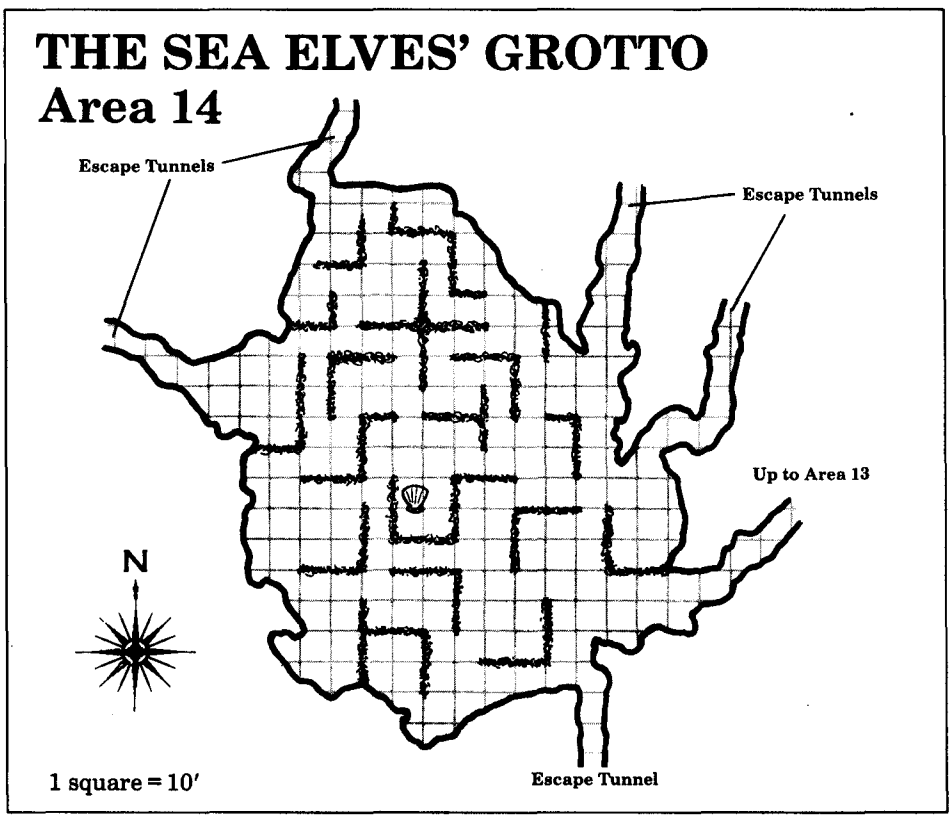
Several small decorations are scattered nearby, including 12 pearls (worth a total of 3,550 gp), a beautifully polished conch shell inscribed with the symbol of Paladine (worth 65 gp), and a patch of healing moss (acts as a potion of *healing*). Elven trinkets are attached to the sides of the sponges: a coral hairpiece in the shape of a dolphin (unfinished, worth 25 gp); a stone knife; a clam-shell comb; and a sealed clam shell containing purple jelly.

The purple jelly is magical, tastes sweet, and smells salty. It is called *jooma* and is both a dessert and a perfume to the sea elves. Jooma shells each contain eight doses of jelly, and swallowing a dose bestows four hours of *water breathing* ability on an air-breathing creature. During that time, the creature cannot breathe air normally—it suffocates if kept out of water (use the rules for holding one's breath given on page 122 of the *PH*). If exposed to open air for 10 minutes, jooma hardens and becomes worthless, so it is stored in airtight containers.

This room's floor is not slick. The east end of the chamber is blocked by another partition of woven kelp. The partition is attached to the sides of the cave by coral latches and can be opened like a door to reveal a corridor leading farther down.

Just above this exit is a 2'-wide tunnel to the sea.

13. Kennel. This cave is partially filled with sea water even during low tide. A tunnel exit from this chamber emerges underwater in a coral bed a mile offshore. The floor is tiered like area 12 (the west end is the highest), and the smooth stone ceiling ranges from 8'-10' high.



The raised portion on the west side of the chamber forms an air pocket when the chamber is submerged. The raised platform is the kennel of five sea otters that the Dimernesti use as guards and playmates (these otters are not *shape-changed* Dimernesti). The otters block surround any non-Dimernesti who enter this room. They swim in circles around the intruders, making occasional warning bites (normal attack roll, 1 hp damage) to force the trespassers to retreat. If the intruders continue forward or attack, the otters fight back. If the PCs retreat to area 12 and stay there, one otter swims down to alert the elves in area 14.

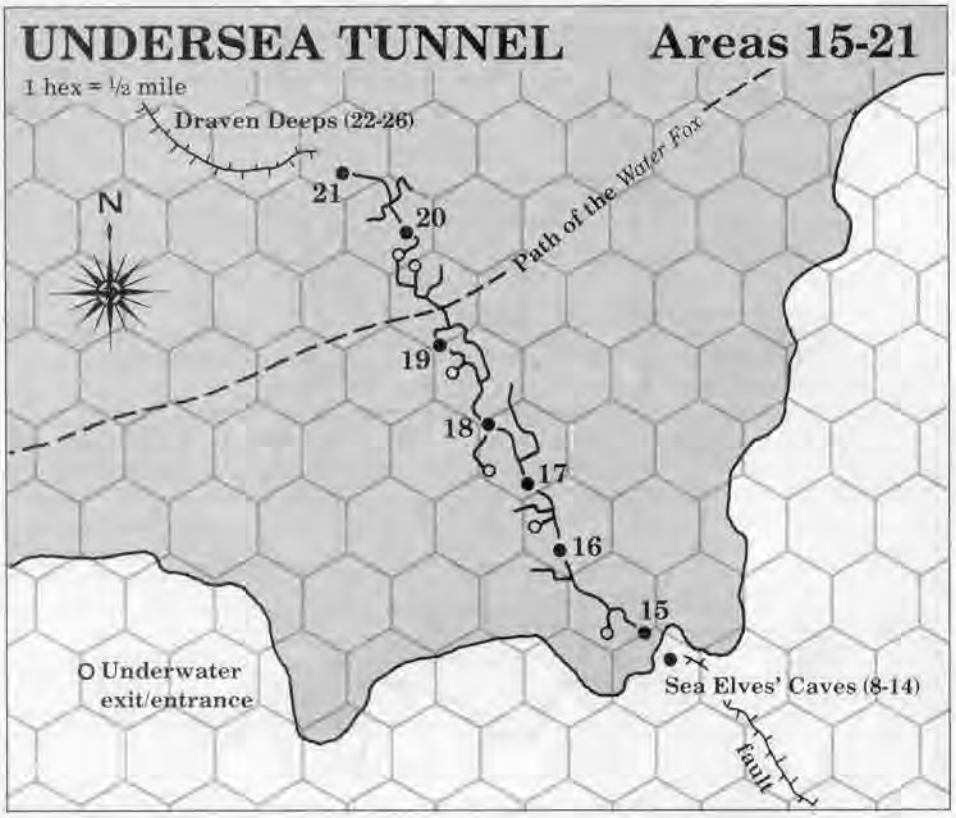
A hollow gourd is suspended by a rope of woven kelp in the raised portion of the chamber. It contains a black, oily substance called *sitha* (see details below).

A 2'-wide hole in the floor is submerged and invisible from above the water. Seawater runs down through this hole into the elves' grotto below. The flow of water is controlled by a grate made of woven kelp fitted over the hole. When the grate is treated with sitha, it swells, decreasing the water flow from the chamber and allowing the elves to keep the upper chambers submerged longer than normal.

Anyone coming within 10' of the grate must make a Dexterity check. If the PC fails, he is swept into the water by the current and must make a Strength check. If he fails that as well, the PC is pinned against the grate and will drown in three rounds unless he can pass a bend-bars roll. Up to three PCs may help (adding their bend bars score to the trapped PC's), providing they pass a Strength check to avoid being trapped themselves.

Any dwarf, gnome, or kender who is trapped against the grate has a 40% chance of being pulled through into area 14 below. If this happens, the PC will be treated as a hostile intruder (see area 14).

Sea otters (5): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 12, swim 18; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SZ S; ML 11; MC4 (Elf, Sea—Dimernesti, modified).



14. The Elves' Grotto. This completely submerged grotto is a large, flat chamber with a ceiling 5'-15' above. The grotto is the home of a small tribe of Dimernesti sea elves who have used curtains of woven kelp (as in area 12) to create walls and rooms. The curtains are moveable to fit the sea elves' whimsical and fleeting tastes in home decoration. However, there is always a central space that is well concealed from the entrances and houses the tribe's treasure and its children. The grotto is accessible only through the underwater passageway from area 13 and through tunnels coming from underwater entrances spread out along the shore.

The elves have lined the passages with many traps to snare the unwelcome. Anyone attempting to enter through the 50'-long passages must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be held fast by kelp and seaweed nooses. PCs trapped in the kelp must pass a bend-bars roll to free themselves. Six sea elves surround a trapped individual in 2-5 rounds. They kill the intruder if he is an enemy or take him to the guest chamber (area 12) if he is not. The elves will use jooma to keep any nonenemy intruders alive.

The elves do not allow outsiders to enter this chamber under any circumstances. If the PCs get past the sea otters in area 13 and try to enter, they will encounter the traps in the tunnel. In addition, 20 normal sea elves led by a 4th-level fighter attack the PCs to drive them out of the caves. The elves throw everything they have at intruders while they lead their children to safety.

Young elves are housed in the center of the grotto until old enough fend for themselves. The inner regions of the home are decorated much like the guest chamber (area 12). There are 60 normal adult Dimernesti here, with 25 children, and eight leaders (six fighter/mages of levels 4/4, the tribal cleric, and the clan elder).

Danik (clan elder): AL NG; AC 7 (5 as otter); MV 9, swim 15 (18 as otter); M12; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type, or 1-3 (as otter); S 11, D 17, C 13, I 17, W 13, Ch 14; ML 13; MC4 (Elf, Sea-Dimernesti).

Spells: *charm person, magic missile, protection from evil, read magic; detect evil, ESP, forget, invisibility; dispel magic, haste, monster summoning I, suggestion; dimension door, fear, magic mirror, wall of ice; Bigby's interposing hand, conjure elemental, dream, hold monster; legend lore.*

Dafta (tribal cleric): AC 6 (5 as otter); C6; hp 26; THAC0 18; S 11, D 18, C 12, I 16, W 15, Ch 14; other statistics as Danik.

Spells: *command, cure light wounds, detect snares and pits; augury, know alignment, obscurement; glyph of warding, continual light.*

Dimernesti leaders (6): F4/M4; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; other statistics as Danik. Spells: *charm person, protection from evil, sleep; scare, stinking cloud.*

Dimernesti (60): AL CG; AC 9 (5 as otter or in chain mail); HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19 (18 with bow or short sword); Dmg by weapon type or 1-3 (as otter); other statistics as Danik; chain mail, tridents, spears, short swords.

Dimernesti children (25): AL CG; AC 10 (5 as otter); HD 1−1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; Dmg 1-2; ML 9; other statistics as Danik.

The spells the Dimernesti use have been modified to work underwater. *Obscurement,* for example, works much like the defensive ink of a giant squid (see the *Monstrous Compendium* entry "Squid, Giant").

More information on the Dimernesti can be found on pages 63-66 of the World Book of the *Tales of the Lance* boxed set and in the MC4 appendix to the *Monstrous Compendium.*

The elves keep their tribal treasures in a 5'-diameter clam shell located in the center of the chamber. The shell is *wizard locked* by a 12th level mage and remains closed unless someone utters the command word ("Kelotta"). Inside are 24 shells of jooma, three hollow gourds of sitha, a collection of 43 gems (worth a total of 13,605 gp), and one massive pearl (worth 4,000 gp). Danik uses the pearl as a reflective surface for his *magic mirror* spell. The clam also contains the tribe's communal spell books, written on small plates of mother-of-pearl set with letters of gold.

If the PCs guess or discover that the caves are home to a benign group of sea-creatures and approach the elves peacefully, the sea otters in area 13 will summon the elves from below. Within six rounds the clan elder Danik, his wife Dafta, and eight male Dimernesti arrive in area 13 to meet with the PCs.

Danik and Dafta are benevolent, calm, and wise. They do not jump to

conclusions. However, they are protective of their home and of their tribe, and they question the PCs sternly about the adventurers' reasons for intruding on the elves' home. If any otters were attacked or killed, Danik and Dafta will believe the PCs are evil, and the heroes will have to make many apologies, explanations, and promises of restitution to regain any footing with the sea elves.

If the PCs do not give Danik and Dafta a respectable purpose for entering their home, or if they show signs of trying to fool the elves, they will be expelled and threatened with dire punishment if they try to enter again. If the meeting is interrupted by the incoming tide, Danik will offer the PCs a taste of the jooma so that the conversation can continue. If the PCs refuse, Danik will offer to meet them in area 12, if the tide is low or ebbing.

If the PCs explain to Danik and Dafta the true reason for their trespassing, and display Dalamar's device, the Dimernesti leaders call a halt to the meeting until they can consult with all the adult members of their tribe. They ask the PCs to wait above ground until the tribe has held council. If asked, Danik will tell the PCs that the council should take two hours. If the PCs do not wish to wait that long, Danik shakes his head and say, "You humans are too hasty, too reckless. Decisions like this must be thought out, or else we will make mistakes." If the PCs persist in their impatience, the clan elder asks them to leave and treats them as if they had lied to the elves. If the PCs wait, Danik, Dafta, and their eight-elf escort appear on the surface two hours later. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The regal sea elf surveys your party, then raises his hand in a respectful greeting. "Please excuse our previous inhospitality. We are not used to trespassers—especially land-dwellers. However, your coming at this time and for this reason does seem a great coincidence. The koalinth who despoil your city's shipping are also our mortal enemies. Their numbers are too great for us to defeat in battle. Although they do not know the location of our home, they know we are near and are seeking us out. We will be forced to leave unless the evil koalinth are turned away. I have spent the last few hours in council with my brethren, and we feel the time is right to work together with you humans against our common enemy. How can we eliminate the koalinth?"

If the PCs have told Danik about Dalamar's device, or if they tell him now, the sea elf asks to see it. If the PCs give it to him, he studies the writings on the cylinder and casts his *legend lore* spell on it. This will take 1-4 turns and will produce the historical information contained in the section "Detonating Dalamar's Device" (Danik will share this information with the PCs if asked). If the PCs will not allow Danik to cast any spells on the device, he asks the PCs to tell him everything they know about it.

After discovering what the device can do, Danik shakes his head and sighs, muttering something about the wild and destructive ways of land-dwellers. He firmly tells the PCs that he will not allow the device to be detonated anywhere near the elves' home, nor deep in the crevice where it may cause the elves harm.

Danik suggests that the device should be set off in the heart of the koalinth colony, where it can affect only its intended target, instead of causing destruction all along the fault. If the PCs ask the elves to plant the device within the Draven Deeps for them, Danik flatly refuses. However, Danik offers to escort the PCs to an undersea tunnel (area 15) that leads to the Draven Deeps. He also offers them a sufficient quantity of jooma to take the device to the colony themselves. He will not, however, send any elves or sea otters to accompany the PCs in the tunnel.

If the PCs are stumped at this point and do not wish to embark on such a dangerous underwater mission, Danik suggests that the humans and sea elves work together to eliminate the threat. He proposes that the two races appoint delegations and make plans to force the koalinth out. Intelligent PCs should realize that such planning would take weeks, even months—time that Palanthas just doesn't have. If the PCs agree to act as go-betweens for Danik's correspondence with Lord Jostin, things will not work out well for them (see "Concluding the Adventure").

If the PCs refuse Danik's suggestion for a correspondence without sufficient explanation, the sea elf will be insulted, believing the PCs to be too conceited and stupid for their own good. He tells them to keep their ugly "land-dweller magic" away from the area and invites them to leave. If the PCs explain that there is not enough time for negotiations, and that it is better for Palanthas to handle the situation in Lord Jostin's "quiet" manner, Danik will understand. If so, the sea elf has no wish for contact with Palanthas after the problem is solved (the elves would rather keep their location a secret), and he tries to swear the PCs to secrecy.

Danik offers one more suggestion. The Dimernesti have always kept an eye on the shipping lanes in the area, for they are wary of the encroachment of men into their territory. The clan elder offers to warn the next ship that passes, in the hope that they can save it from koalinth attack.

Lord Jostin has entrusted the PCs with the completion of an important mission, and the PCs must decide how to accomplish it. Three possible solutions are described in the meeting with Danik, but the DM or the PCs may think of something else. Alternate solutions must be fleshed out by the DM.

If the PCs decide not to travel through the undersea tunnel (areas 15-21) but go across the sea floor instead, the DM can use the salt-water depths random encounter table from the *Monstrous Compendium* to create some interesting complications along the way to the Draven Deeps. If the adventurers choose the sea-floor route, Danik gives them each two shells full of jooma. He also instructs the PCs to follow the underwater cliff that runs above and parallel to the tunnels of areas 15-21, so they won't get lost in the depths.

The fault is easy to follow under the water. If the PCs stray from the cliff and become lost, use the tables on page 128 of the *DMG* to deal with them. The sea floor is equivalent to rolling ground, with the modifier for darkness. The PCs may also gain the "landmark sighted" modifier if they navigate by the general slope of the sea floor as it descends to the northwest. The sea depth in this area ranges from 0′ at the shore to 800′ in the depths. The average depth is 400′, plus or minus 2d10 × 10′.

The Undersea Tunnel

If the PCs elect to plant the device in the Draven Deeps themselves, Danik will lead them to the entrance to the undersea tunnel. It lies 30 yards northwest of the seaside caves, and 10 yards offshore. If the PCs do not talk with the sea elves and manage to find this area on their own, they must come up with their own methods for traveling underwater.

The entrance shaft to the undersea tunnel appears as a deep hole in the rocks under the surf. The sea floor here is 60′ underwater during high tide, 40′ during low tide. The hole is not easily noticed from the shore, but swimmers have a 30% chance of noticing a dark, immobile shape in the depths. Anyone swimming within 20′ of the hole or looking at it from at least 100′ in the air (by *flying,* for example) has an 80% chance of recognizing the hole for what it is.

The opening is 20′ wide and emits a constant, subtle flow of warm water. The passage appears to descend at an 80° angle toward the north. Without magical aid, the PCs cannot see more than 1′-2′ in the deeper regions of the tunnel. If the PCs ask, Dafta (the Dimernesti priest from the seaside caves) will cast her *continual light* spell on an item the PCs can carry. The effects of all light sources are halved in the depths.

If the PCs have not met Danik and the Dimernesti, skip the following box.

> The sea elves are wary as they stand in the shallow water of the shore, watching you. The one called Danik calls your attention to a dark shape about 100′ offshore, barely visible beneath the waves. "There, beneath the surf, is the opening of a tunnel that leads to the koalinth colony. The koalinth have not explored it extensively and do not know how close this exit lies to our home. If you wish to use that device to eliminate the koalinth, I will not stop you. However, you must leave it within the koalinth colony itself. Do not leave it in the tunnels or near our home. If it were exploded there, it would destroy us, along with any chances of our helping you in the future. Do you understand?"

If the PCs do not understand, or ask questions, Danik explains: "If the device is detonated in one of the stable areas of the fault, it will cause the whole fault to shift and shake. If the explosion occurs in the already unstable Draven Deeps, the effect should be localized." If the PCs require a more detailed explanation, see "Detonating Dalamar's Device." When the PCs clearly understand Danik's reasoning, the sea elf continues.

> "I do not believe land-dwellers like yourselves will find it a comfortable journey, but we will provide what aid we can." He pulls several small shells from a pouch at his side and gives two shells to each of you. "These contain jooma. It will help you breathe underwater. There should be enough for all of you to make the journey to the koalinth, do your deed, and return. We cannot come to your aid if your quest proves unsuccessful, for then the koalinth would track us to our home. Our wishes for luck and success go with you, however. The koalinth colony is about four miles away along the fault."

Danik answers any questions the PCs have about the underwater environment, including combat. He knows everything relevant explained on page 79 of the *DMG* and pages 120-122 of the *PH,* and the DM can share this information with the players. If the PCs ask, Danik will provide each of them with a spear to use as a thrusting weapon underwater. As a mage, he cautions wizards about taking spell components underwater (some powders and other items can be ruined) and gives the party two airtight pouches that are accessible underwater (this is possible because a thick jelly forms an airlock on the mouth of the pouch). Mages need two rounds to get anything from such a pouch, however. Danik will safeguard any valuables the PCs wish to leave behind.

Danik, Dafta, and the other sea elves watch all the PCs descend into the hole before they return to their home. They do not leave until all PCs have gone, because they fear that the PCs might try to plant the device somewhere near their home while the elves are not watching.

The tunnel leads along the crevice, from the coast to the Draven Deeps. Several obstacles and encounters in the tunnel are shown on the map of areas 15-21, although the DM can modify these to fit the PCs' journey.

If the PCs leave the undersea tunnel through one of the exits shown on the map, they will have to search the sea floor for another entrance. Finding an entrance is as difficult as discovering a secret door, and PCs have the usual chances to find them when they are in the correct hex.

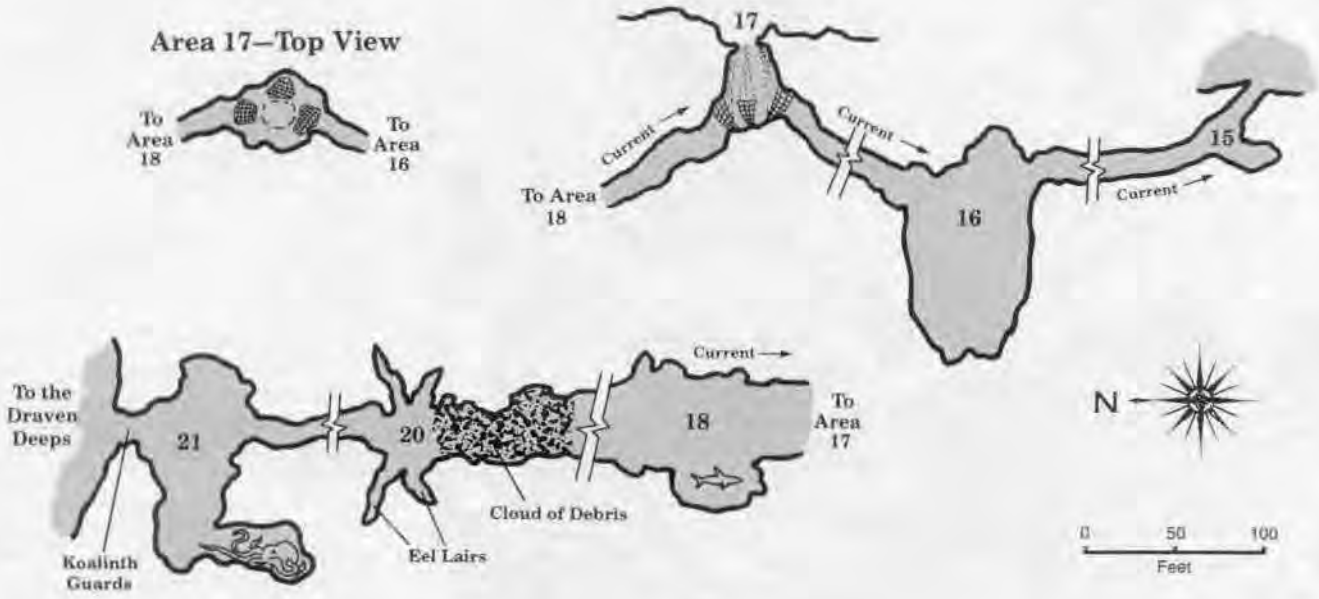
While journeying in the tunnel, the PCs may meet hostile sea creatures. Roll 1d10 each turn the PCs are in the tunnel; an encounter occurs on a 1. Then roll 1d6 and consult the following chart.

1. **Silver fish** (1-100): like those encountered in area 15 (see below).
2. **Sting ray:** INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV swim 9; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison (5-20 hp damage and paralyzation for as many turns); SZ S (5′ wingspan); ML 5; XP 120; MC1 (Ray, sting).

   A random PC accidentally steps on this creature, which attacks for two rounds before fleeing.
3. **Large fish** (1-100): While as harmless as the small silver fish encountered in area 15, these fish are all 1′-2′ long and much quicker.
4. **Kelp:** A thick patch of kelp grows up from the sand at the base of the tunnel. The patch extends for the next 10d10 yards. Movement and visibility are halved in the kelp.
5. **Black urchin:** INT semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, swim 6; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4; SA +2 to hit, poisoned spines (save or be paralyzed for 2-16 turns); SZ S; ML 11; XP 65; MC2.

   This creature is winding its way through the tunnel in search of shellfish. It attacks the PCs in self defense until they kill it or move more than 10′ away.
6. **Steam pocket:** Because of the unstable nature of the crevice, small fissures periodically open up in the tunnel. One such crack has opened up in this area, releasing a cloud of hot, bubbling steam. Each PC has a 40% chance (80% for PCs with infravision) of noticing the cloud as it rushes toward them down the tunnel. PCs who see the cloud can get out of the way. Anyone in the tunnel as the steam cloud passes takes 2-8 hp damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Those who shelter against the sides of the tunnel take half damage (no damage if the save is made).

UNDERSEA TUNNEL—SIDE VIEW
Areas 15-21



15. Descending Shaft. The shaft drops about 40′ to a small chamber.

> The shaft opens up into a small grotto with sand-covered walls and floor. Swaying in the slight current of warm water are the tendrils of several clusters of green kelp. Small, knifelike forms dart in and out of the kelp, reflecting the sunlight that filters into this chamber. To the north, the tunnel continues, angling slightly down between jagged rocks.

If the PCs have a light, they can identify the knifelike forms as small silver fish. Without light, the sunlight reflecting off the silver skin of the fish gives the area a mystical, dreamlike aura.

A solitary shark made its lair in the south portion of this cave until it was hunted down and slain by the sea elves. If the PCs search the back portion of the cavern, they have a 40% chance to discover several small bones in the sand on the floor.

Traveling north from this chamber into the tunnel means traveling against the current. The PCs' movement rates are all reduced by one point because of this, but they get to add a point of movement to their normal rates on the return trip.

16. The Chasm. The tunnel opens abruptly before this great drop. If the PCs have a light source, they see the floor suddenly drop away from them. Without light, the first PC to enter the area falls into the chasm unless he makes a saving throw vs. paralyzation with a −2 penalty.

The chasm was the site of a small eruption long ago. Since then, the area has cooled to form this 60′-long, 40′-wide, 120′-deep fissure. The bottom is solid rock. The current of water flows steadily north to south through the top portion of this chamber.

To cross this chasm, the PCs must swim. PCs in metal armor cannot make it to the other side without mechanical or magical aid. Rules for swimming with equipment are given on pages 120-122 of the *PH*. Regardless of when the DM last checked for a random encounter, he should make another check here.

The tunnel leading from the north end of this area climbs gently up to area 17.

17. Orughi Fishermen. The ascending tunnel comes within 30′ of the surface here, where it burrows beneath a small island. A shaft leads up from the tunnel to a pool in the middle of the island. The island is the home of three orughi. These sea-dwelling ogres use the pool (and the shaft to the tunnel) as a fishing hole.

The orughi fish with nets made from kelp strands, with bones and teeth woven into the fibers to form hooks. They weight these nets with rocks and drop them into the tunnel, where they hope to catch the large fish that pass through (see encounters detailed for "The Undersea Tunnel"). The orughi's infravision allows them to clearly see figures in the tunnel below. One orughi watches the pool at all times and has a 60% chance of noticing the PCs as they pass through.

There are two nets in the tunnel; their positions are noted on the diagram of this area. The PCs have the same chance to see the nets as they have of noticing secret doors. If they don't notice the nets, each PC has a 20% chance of disturbing one. Any movement of the net alerts the orughi on watch above; he

reacts as detailed below. If any PCs decide to swim to the top of the pool, there is a 95% chance that the orughi notices them.

When the orughi on guard notices figures in the tunnel, it gets the attention of its fellows, then pulls on the ropes to one of the nets. All PCs within 5′ of the net must roll Dexterity checks (with a +2 penalty for being in water) to avoid being caught and dragged up to the pool.

Each net can hold a maximum of two man-sized beings. If more than two PCs are caught in a net, one (randomly determined) can slip free in one round. Netted PCs take 1-3 hp damage from the hooks and are drawn upward at a rate of 20′ per round, though overloaded nets (those holding more than two PCs) are pulled up at half that speed.

In the net, PCs are AC 10 and cannot attack the orughi, but they can try to cut the net (AC 8). To free trapped PCs, a net must take 15 hp damage. Any PC under the influence of jooma (from area 12) is unable to breathe air and suffocates unless returned to the water (PCs can hold their breath as detailed on page 122 of the *PH*).

When a PC is drawn to the top, the orughi pulls him out of the pool, throws him to the ground, and begins to pummel him with a large club.

Once the first orughi alerts its fellows to possible prey, the orughi arrive in two rounds and pull on the other nets. The orughi try to capture as many of the PCs as possible before dining on anyone. If all of the nets are cut before the orughi have captured anyone, there is a 30% chance they will dive in and attack the PCs in the water. The orughi are strong swimmers, attacking with stone knives underwater. They can hold their breath for 20 rounds.

The island above is covered with sand and rocks, with only a few palm trees and a bit of grass. The orughi have no treasure.

Orughi (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, swim 18; HD 4+1; hp 21 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +2 damage due to strength; SZ M (4′-5′ tall); ML 7; XP 175; MC4 (Ogre of Krynn). These creatures are armed with clubs and knives.

The tunnel continues onward, slanting down into the crevice and gradually widening. Several small side tunnels (extending only 50′ off the main shaft) branch off periodically in random directions. If the PCs continue to follow the largest tunnel, they will not get lost.

18. The Shark. The tunnel is 30′ in diameter and filled with small clusters of aquatic plants. A 12′-long female shark is resting in this area after a recent feeding. She does not attack unless one of the PCs has been wounded. If she scents blood, she will attack.

The tunnel descends steeply to the northwest.

Shark: INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 24; HD 6; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 270; MC2.

19. The Collapse. This area has recently collapsed, and the tunnel is filled with sand and rock. Although small cavities and pockets can be seen through the rubble, none are large enough to allow the PCs to pass through (without magical aid). Disturbing the rocks is 25% likely to cause another collapse in the vicinity. All PCs within 10′ of the cave-in must save vs. paralyzation or take 1-4 hp damage. This should warn the PCs of the dangers of clearing the tunnel and passing through. The PCs must go back and take the side passageway to the east as shown on the sea encounter map. Keep track of the time the PCs spend searching for a way around the cave-in (and its effect on their *water breathing* abilities).

20. Cloud of Debris. This region of the tunnel is very unstable. Small spurts of steam and other gases escape from fissures in the earth to shake the rock of the crevice. Sand and stones continually shift, and a constant cloud of debris clogs the length of the tunnel (see map). If the PCs move through this cloud while under the influence of a *water breathing* spell (or the sea elves' jooma), they must save vs. breath weapon or begin coughing and choking on the debris in the water. No combat is possible while the victim coughs, though the victim can move at half normal speed. The choking persists for 1-3 rounds after the victim leaves the cloud. Covering one's mouth with a fine cloth while passing through the cloud will prevent the coughing spasm.

Beyond the cloud, two giant eels lair in a series of 2′-wide burrows that sink 20′-30′ into the rock around the tunnel. They are very irritable and always

attack passersby, including PCs emerging from the cloud. When the eels fail a morale check, however, they retreat deep into their burrows and do not come out for 1-3 days. They have no treasure.

Giant eels (2): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 9; HD 5; hp 19, 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SZ H; ML 8; XP 175; MC2.

21. Lurker in the Depths. From the south, the tunnel shrinks to little more than 2′ in diameter. Beyond the constriction, the passage opens up into a large chamber with an exit in the opposite wall. This grotto looks much like the chasm in area 16, as the floor drops away from the tunnel entrance into darkness. However, at the base of the pit, the south wall opens into a small cave where a giant octopus lurks. Just north of this chamber, the tunnel opens into the Draven Deeps, site of the koalinth colony.

The marine hobgoblins keep the octopus confined in this cave and feed it the victims of their plunderings. To the koalinth, this brutal treatment is a religious matter. It reinforces their belief in the superiority of sea-dwellers over land-dwellers. As a result, the giant octopus is usually kept well fed. The bones, tattered clothes, and other remains of the octopus's victims (including three sea-elven spears and a rusty short sword) are scattered in the depths of the pit in front of its small niche.

When the PCs first enter this cave from the south, there is a 75% chance that the octopus detects them through disturbances in the currents and the PCs' smell in the water. If so, it takes one round to slowly move out into the bottom of the pit. From there it attacks the PCs with its tentacles as they pass overhead. It attempts to grab up to three human-sized figures and pull them down to its lair. If the octopus takes more than 30 hp damage, or if three or more of its tentacles are severed, it tries to retreat into the side cave, perhaps bringing some victims with it. It uses its ink to hide this retreat. If the octopus is pursued into its cave, it will fight to the death.

Giant octopus: INT animal; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 3, swim 12; HD 8; hp 51; THAC0 12; #AT 7; Dmg 1-4 (×6)/2-12; SA constriction; SD ink, color change; SZ L; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC2.

If the PCs are able to pass through this chamber without destroying the octopus, the creature stays alert and waiting for 3-18 turns. If the PCs later try to retreat from the Draven Deeps through the tunnel, the octopus will be ready for them.

Beyond the northern exit to this lair, the tunnel opens up into the crevice that houses the koalinth colony (areas 22-26). Two koalinth guards (statistics as koalinth warriors in "The Draven Deeps" section that follows) are posted near the tunnel's opening, but they have only a 10% chance of hearing the sounds of combat in the octopus's lair.

The Draven Deeps

Years ago, when the Cataclysm shook and molded the face of Krynn, a great fissure opened beneath the water, allowing tremendous amounts of heat and pressure to escape. The great forces split the planet's crust at its seams, creating the fault that continues underwater and far inland (see area 6). After bubbling and shaking for a few years, the activity died down and the fissure resealed itself. But the geothermic forces left their mark on the land and sea. A great cliff was created, and the rock and crust around it were riddled with extensive tunnels. Many of these tunnels still exist (see "The Underwater Tunnel").

Since the Cataclysm, this fissure has periodically reopened to release the pressures from below. The last reopening occurred 60 years ago. A sea-captain named Draven Argentsin had boasted that his caravel, the *Galedancer,* could outrun any ship. Many tried to beat her, but the *Galedancer* lived up to her captain's claim. On one day, Draven was speeding well in front of four challengers when the underwater fissure opened and engulfed his ship in flame and ash. Draven and his wrecked ship were swallowed in the resulting maelstrom. The place where Draven perished has since been named the Draven Deeps.

The site of the fissure is now cool and solid, although small bursts of steam and gases periodically stir the water (see area 26). A tribe of koalinth has moved into the caves that dot the cliff overlooking the northeast side of the fissure (see the "Koalinth Colony" map). The caves extend 20′-120′ into the cliff. The floors of the caves are rocky and uneven, with many niches that serve as beds or hiding places for the koalinth.

There are currently 152 adult male koalinth, 107 females, and 66 young in the colony. Also present are seven leaders, 14 assistants, two sub-chiefs, and the chieftain. Not all of the population is present at Draven Deeps at any given time. About half of the warriors are on patrol or hunting, about a third of the females are gathering food, and up to half the children are learning from their elders or bullying each other in the depths.

After arriving three month ago, the koalinth have prospered due to abundant sea life and shipping lanes that beg to be plundered.

The koalinth don't know they live in a dangerous zone, and they do not realize the significance of the steam and occasional tremors. They know a group of Dimernesti lives somewhere close by, and they send regular scouting missions to find the sea elves' home. Being more interested in plundering Palanthian ships than in exploring, they have not investigated the dark tunnel beyond the "Lurker in the Depths" (the giant octopus at area 21).

Koalinth chieftain: INT average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 4; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3 (spear); SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; MC1 (Hobgoblin).

Koalinth subchiefs (2): AC 3; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 17; Dmg by weapon type +2 (spear); XP 65; other statistics as for koalinth chieftain.

Koalinth leaders and assistants (21): AC 5; HD 1+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; Dmg by weapon type (spear or dagger); XP 35; other statistics as for koalinth chieftain.

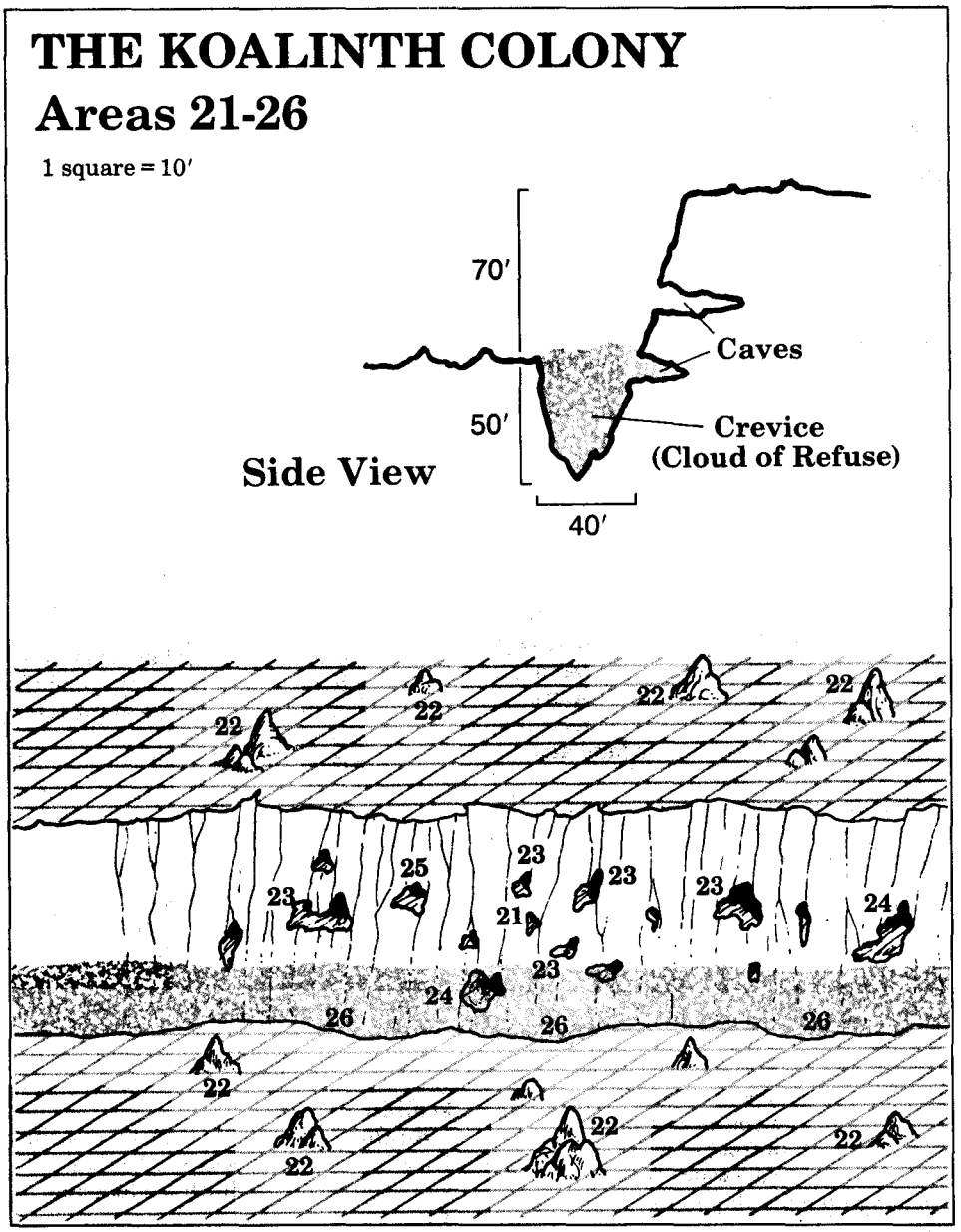
Koalinth warriors (152): hp 6 each; Dmg by weapon type (spear); other statistics as for koalinth leaders and assistants.

The koalinth females and young are noncombatants and have 1-6 hp each.

Each turn that the PCs spend in the Draven Deeps (in the area shown on the map) there is a 1-in-6 chance that they will encounter 1-6 koalinth warriors (40%), 1-4 koalinth females (30%), or 1-3 koalinth young. The females and young swim to the nearest cave to alert the tribe, and 2-12 koalinth warriors pursue the PCs in 2-4 rounds. If warriors are encountered, one of them will always flee to warn the tribe, bringing 2-12 more koalinth in 2-8 rounds.

Once the tribe is aware that intruders are present in the deeps, the females

THE KOALINTH COLONY
Areas 21-26



withdraw into the caves while the males all go to track down the intruders. The PCs see groups of koalinth prowling and searching the whole area (encountered as above). If the koalinth come upon the PCs inside the colony, they will attack to kill.

The chieftain interrogates all captives using a crude form of Common. He tries to discover the real reasons for their intrusion and asks them specifically where the Dimernesti live. If the PCs reveal this information, he may be persuaded to let the adventurers live (long enough to verify the truth of their words and attack the Dimernesti).

If the PCs do not reveal the location of the sea elves' home, or if they are hesitant (as though preparing a lie), the koalinth chieftain will have them thrown to the Lurker in the Depths (area 21) without their weapons. He keeps their weapons and obvious treasure in his own cave, adding them to the tribal treasury (see area 25).

The koalinth do not keep prisoners longer than two days for any reason; they either kill and eat their prisoners or they feed them to the giant octopus in area 21.

Two koalinth are posted at the tunnel exit (area 21) to guard the entrance of the cave. If they are attacked, one fights while the other flees to alert the tribe (as detailed above). If the PCs are brought here after an audience with the chieftain, the koalinth will enter the cave and awaken the octopus, then force the PCs into the pit at spearpoint.

22. Guard Post. Six koalinth warriors armed with spears and nets are stationed at each of these guard posts. They remain motionless before attacking and receive a bonus of −2 to their surprise rolls. If the PCs approach peacefully, they find themselves surrounded by koalinth guards who demand that the adventurers drop their weapons and submit to being bound. The PCs are then conducted before the tribal chieftain. If the PCs refuse to surrender their weapons or be bound, the koalinth attack. They do not let intruders past them and attack to subdue using their nets. Five koalinth attack the trespassers while one goes to alert the chieftain.

If the PCs allow themselves to be taken before the chieftain, their arms will be bound with kelp bonds, and they will be conducted to area 25. If the PCs manage to kill the sentry who flees to warn the tribe of intruders, the koalinth colony will not be alerted to their presence.

23. Tribal Caves. The tribal caves extend 20'-80' into the fissure wall. Each cave houses 2-12 koalinth warriors, 2-12 females, and 1-8 children (females and children are noncombatants). These koalinth are resting or preparing food. Bones and refuse are tossed out of the cave to fall into the crevice below.

24. Subchiefs' Caves. The subchiefs' caves extend 20'-120' into the fissure wall. Each houses a sub-chief with 2-4 females.

25. Chieftain's Cave. The chieftain's cave is 130' deep, with a 20'-wide mouth. He has five female consorts, and six warriors guard the entrance. Inside the cave are the tribe's treasures: 9,322 sp; 5,834 gp; 935 steel pieces; and 35 gems worth 50 gp (×16), 250 gp (×12), 500 gp (×4), 750 gp (×2), and 2,000 gp.

26. Crevice. The crevice here is 50' deep and 40' wide. The floor is littered

with debris thrown down from the tribal caves in the wall above. Escaping gases from small fissures on the floor of the crevice stir up the refuse, creating a hazy cloud that limits all underwater vision to 5′ (see map).

Detonating Dalamar's Device

Dalamar created the explosive device using methods and magic unheard of on Ansalon since before the Cataclysm, when the Kingpriest of Istar crusaded against the Wizards of High Sorcery. At that time, some mages were determined to fight back rather than negotiate, and they prepared magical items of great destructive power to use in battle. When the wizards decided against fighting the Kingpriest, these destructive items were magically deactivated.

Great amounts of thermal energy have been magically summoned, compacted, and locked within Dalamar's brass cylinder. These forces are controlled by the magical runes inscribed on the outside of the device. The brass key is a small miniature of the cylinder, and the two are magically linked. As Ryon mentioned in the "Adventure Background," the device detonates when the small brass rod is snapped.

The PCs must decide how, when, and where to plant and detonate the device. They may plant it in the seaside caves before they encounter the sea elves (or even after speaking with them, which would surely force the PCs' alignments toward evil). The PCs could also drop the device into the crevice at the Draven Deeps, whether they pass secretly through the undersea tunnel or approach the koalinth colony across the sea floor. The effect of exploding the device depends on where it is detonated.

Wherever the explosion occurs, all living things within 30′ are killed by the heat or by the impact, and anything within 60′ must save vs. breath weapon or die. Anyone within 120′ of the explosion takes 5d10 hp damage and must save vs. wands or be deafened for 1-3 days. All within 300′ take 1d10 hp damage and must save vs. paralyzation or be blinded for 2-5 days. The effects (other than damage) are cumulative, so that a person 50′ away from the explosion who makes his saving throw vs. breath weapon suffers 5d10 hp damage as well as possible deafness and blindness.

If the explosion occurs in the Draven Deeps, use the information in the above paragraph and that given in areas 22-26 to determine how many koalinth are killed (in relation to where the PCs placed the device). If more than half the koalinth are killed, the rest of the tribe will move to a safer spot farther north, and the threat to shipping is over (see "Concluding the Adventure"). If less than half are killed, the Dimernesti drive the koalinth out within a few weeks (provided the elves are still alive).

Although the Draven Deeps lies on the fault, exploding the device there does not affect the rest of the fault. The seaside caves, the underwater shaft, and the cliff on land are stable points along the fault, like hinges. If one of the "hinges" is snapped by the explosion, the whole fault will shake, whereas disturbing any point beyond the hinges does not cause such a disturbance.

If the PCs detonate the device anywhere along the fault (on land or at sea) other than the Draven Deeps, and the explosion takes place at least 30′ beneath the ground or sea floor, the entire fault will be affected. At sea, the tremor causes maelstroms and powerful currents that sweep animal and plant life before them (crushing it against the solid floor of the sea). The undersea tunnel (areas 15-21) collapses, and steam and other gases are released into the water from below. At the Draven Deeps, a great fissure opens up in the crevice, spewing forth gouts of magma and pockets of sulfurous gas. Between 50%-80% of the koalinth are killed in the upheaval, and the rest leave for safer waters.

On land, a tremor runs the length of the cliff face (described in area 6), shaking loose great shards of rock that fall and crush everything below them. The ceilings of all of the caves throughout the fault collapse. In the seaside caves, 3-18 sea elves are killed by the collapse (the results of which are detailed in "Concluding the Adventure").

If the PCs are in dangerous territory when the device is set off, the DM can consult the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for guidelines on earthquakes and avalanches (pages 78-83).

The device cannot be detonated within three miles of the Tower of High Sorcery in Palanthas. This magical protection is ensured by the very writings that contain the powerful thermal energies inside the brass cylinder. This protection cannot be bypassed without much work and magical experience (Dalamar, who created the device, is the highest-ranking black-robed wizard in Ansalon). Because of these protections, Dalamar—and therefore Lord Jostin—is willing to trust the PCs with the device. Still, such responsibility and power are not to be taken lightly, and Jostin and Dalamar are keeping tabs on the party (see "Concluding the Adventure").

Concluding the Adventure

Two weeks after the PCs are given the mission and the device, the *Water Fox* approaches the Gates of Paladine. If the PCs have eliminated the koalinth by then, the *Fox* will arrive safely in Palanthas. If the PCs have not eliminated the koalinth, the *Fox* is attacked just outside the Gates of Paladine (on the sea map, in the hex west of the Draven Deeps).

The attack comes in the early hours of the morning, as 80 koalinth warriors clamber up the sides of the *Water Fox* and slaughter the crew aboard. If the PCs make it on board the *Fox* before the attack, they may be able to fight the koalinth off and save the crew and cargo. The *Water Fox* has a crew of 42 men (30 0-level humans, eight 1st-level fighters, and four 3rd-level fighters) and the captain, a 5th-level fighter named Lannigan. Lannigan carries a *long sword +2*; the other seamen fight with short swords or daggers.

If the PCs and crew somehow manage to fight off the koalinth and return to Palanthas, Lord Jostin will thank them. However, the lord of Palanthas will also be mildly upset because the problem has not been solved. The PCs do not receive their reward money (yet), and Jostin tells them to go back and do the job they were supposed to do. If the PCs tell Jostin about the Dimernesti, the lord urges the party to get the elves to help them, and to do it quickly. He has too much on his mind to solve the problem for the PCs.

Unfortunately, if the PCs return to Palanthas for any reason without eliminating the koalinth (even to set up negotiations with Danik), a terrible thing will happen to the Dimernesti while they are gone. Koalinth scouts stumble on the undersea entrance to the Dimernesti home, and the evil creatures attack the sea elves in force.

The Dimernesti caves are demolished,

and the lower chambers are filled with the bodies of valiant elven warriors who tried to defend their home from the koalinth. The Dimernesti women and children escape (in otter form), but the warriors and leaders, including Danik, are all dead. Dafta, alone, lives to lead the remaining members of her tribe to safer waters.

When and if the PCs return to the elven caves, they encounter a squad of 10 koalinth looters searching the place for any forgotten treasures. If the PCs return with the device, they can plant it inside the seaside caves without any fear of harming the sea elves (the resulting explosion is detailed in "Detonating Dalamar's Device"), but they may always have a guilty conscience. Could they have avoided the destruction of the Dimernesti?

The adventure is over when one of five things happens:

- The PCs all perish.
- The PCs plant and detonate the device in the Draven Deeps amid the koalinth caves.
- The PCs plant and detonate the device within the seaside caves.
- The PCs return to Palanthas (without detonating the device) to set up negotiations between Lord Jostin and Danik of the Dimernesti (detailed above).
- The PCs return to Palanthas without eliminating the koalinth or after losing the device (possibly to the bandits at areas 1 or 4).

If the PCs use the device to devastate the koalinth of the Draven Deeps before the creatures attack the *Water Fox*, the koalinth menace will be over, and the Dimernesti will be saved. Unless the DM judges otherwise, shipping in Palanthas should return to normal in two months—a time that helps the Palanthians count their blessings.

After seeing the PCs' success in this mission, Lord Jostin may ask them to help with another problem. For instance, he may ask them to gather information on the faction working to thwart him, eliminate the bandits in the region, or find an honorable way for him to get out of building Dalamar's school of black magic.

If the PCs are successful in eliminating the koalinth menace, Lord Jostin gladly pays the rest of their reward upon their return. He announces their deeds in the Central Plaza, and the city has its heroes for the year. Any elves in the PC group should feel some guilt if any sea elves were hurt during the course of this adventure.

If the party detonates the device in the seaside caves without learning that the Dimernesti live below, the PCs should feel they have successfully accomplished their mission. However, within a week, the PCs begin having recurring nightmares of elven figures calling out for justice and vengeance.

Soon, lacedons (underwater ghouls) begin hunting the PCs, attacking them when they are most vulnerable. The lacedons are the remnants of the dead Dimernesti, seeking revenge on their murderers. After a total of 48 lacedons have attacked, a revenant—the avenging spirit of Danik—comes seeking the PCs' deaths.

If the PCs somehow lose the device (either to the bandits of areas 1 and 4 or to the koalinth) and are unable to get it back, Dalamar will find out (through a *magic mirror* spell) and inform Lord Jostin of what happened and where the device is. Lord Jostin then forces the PCs to retrieve the device and try again. During the delay, the *Water Fox* may arrive, and the Dimernesti may be wiped out by the koalinth.

Manipulating the environment as the PCs have done may have some results that Dalamar didn't foresee. Perhaps the explosion awakens or attracts some horror of the deep that comes to imperil the lives of mankind. A giant squid, a sea dragon, or an amphidragon could pick up where the koalinth left off. Lord Jostin might hire the adventurers to hunt down and eliminate this new threat.

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